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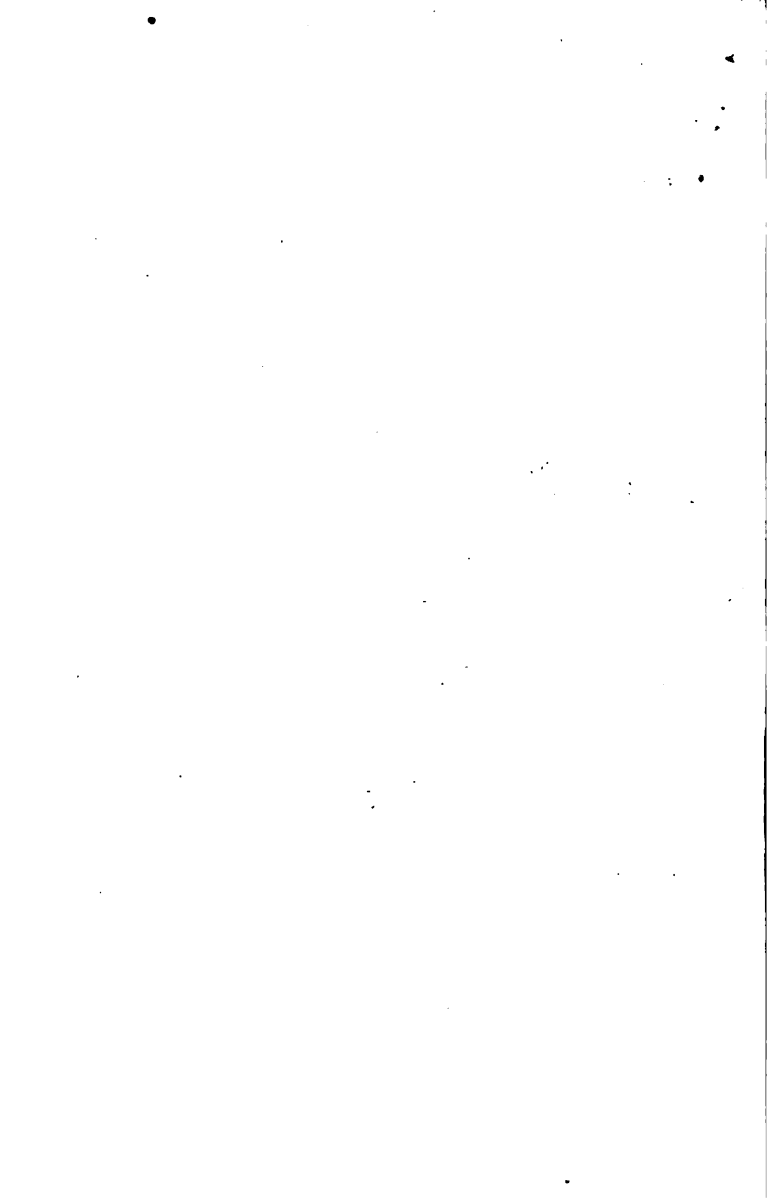
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Allah-Akbar.

GOD IS GREAT.

AN ARAB LEGEND OF THE SIEGE AND CONQUEST
OF GRANADA.

From the Spanish.

By MARIANA MONTEIRO.



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PREFACE.

GRANADA and its history has always possessed a great charm for historical readers. The poetic character of the Arabs, who for several centuries held possession of its fertile lands, has filled many a page with romantic events and records of brave deeds.

The marvellous advantages which Granada offered in its sunny climate and luxuriance of soil for founding and erecting the Alcazar of the Alhambra, with its gardens of delight, its rippling fountains, the dreamy, perfumed atmosphere of its retreats and chambers, combined with the exquisite harmony of colouring displayed by the Moors in their

wondrous architecture, has lent an absorbing interest to everything which relates to Granada.

That the Moors and Arabs were a very superior race, there are numberless vestiges yet extant to prove, in the lovely remains, broken and mutilated it is true, of many buildings in Granada, Cordova, Toledo, and in other cities and towns of Spain, which fully bears out the artistic taste and refinement which characterised them; and though but little known in England, their literature was also very beautiful, and in perfect harmony with their refined ideas.

The widespread and beautiful account of the conquest of Granada by Washington Irving, which he derived from Catholic historians, principally from the manuscript chronicles of the learned monk Fray A. Agapida, has done more than anything else to bring forward the thrilling events and deeds performed by both Christian and Moorish knights before and after the conquest.

The present legend of Allah-Akbar (God is great), in contradistinction to Washington Irving's history, is the Moorish description derived from Arab sources of the siege and loss of Granada and its lovely Alcazares; a terrible loss to them after reigning over and possessing the land for nearly eight centuries.

This legend I have translated from the Spanish, and have endeavoured to adhere faithfully to the Oriental style of description and composition, which is very peculiar, and which at times reads like a religious prose poem. Their sentiments of lofty piety (although with an ever dark tinge of fatalism which the Arabs derive from the teaching of the Koran) are very beautiful, and reveal a soul-inspiring love for the Almighty, Whom they always mention with extreme reverence, the Koran being undoubtedly in many respects a very high code of laws. Whether English critics will judge that I have adhered too closely to its Oriental manner of expression to please their taste, I know not; but my endeavour

has been to keep as near as possible to the original—a matter of no little difficulty in translating from a semi-Oriental into a Northern language—and therefore I have made no attempt to alter the style, but simply offer it as a *translation*, not a *compilation*.

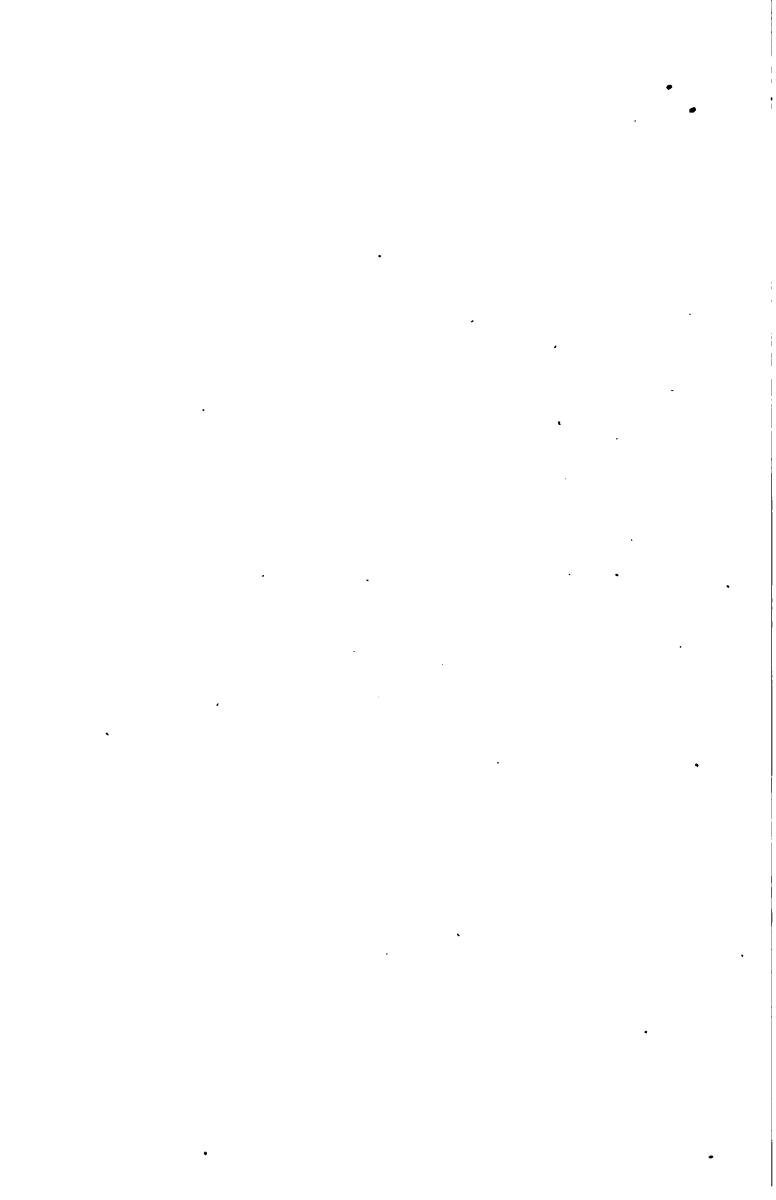
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x

Allah-Akbar.

GOD IS GREAT.

I.

THE GENIUS OF THE ALHAMBRA.

THERE is no God but God. He alone is strong:
His Spirit lives in the past, It fills the present,
and encompasses the future.

A profound shadow and a night of sorrow
will overspread the world when He shall re-
move His countenance, because He is the
Light and the Truth.

He alone is immutable: one day succeeds
another, a moon another moon, a season
follows a past season; a year following the

one which has preceded it quickly passes away, and becomes engulfed in the eternity of ages.

And with man the work of his hands passes away with time, and where once a city stood appears an abyss, and where from its heights lofty mountains were seen, now flows the powerful sweeping wave of the sea.

All things pass away, and return and pass away again: one man takes the place of another; a generation succeeds another generation: an empire is superseded by another empire. And the finger of God impels them on, and His voice commands them, saying, "Go forward!"

And they proceed on the by-path; a plant springs up in place of a former one, and another will succeed it in the future.

They journey on without knowing where they are proceeding to; but He, the Most High and only God, ever remains the same.

I adore that Spirit, without limit in Its form or power, Whom all the elements obey.

By Whose power the thunder roars, and the lightning flashes fire, the tempest rages, and the light gives its light.

When the womb of the earth is troubled,
and the depth of the sea agitated: when the
just are terrified and pronounce His name;
then does He command the elements, and
bids them "stay, and be stilled."

And the earth is stilled on its foundations,
and the light from the flashes of lightning is
put out upon the winds, and all things tremble
before Him, the Lord of Infinitude, Who with
the dust of empires has written with His finger
upon the face of the earth the word Vanity.

Blessed be Him, fountain of wisdom and of
goodness! May the light of His Spirit shine
upon this book, that it may be made manifest
to all the people, and endure in the ages which
are to come.

The night is gathering close around me,
and its silence is deep and solemn.

The moon shines in the vaulted ceiling of
the heavens, like a pearly lamp suspended
from an arch of sapphires studded with flicker-
ing stars.

From time to time, upon the wings of the
night breeze which fans my hair, steeped in
scent arising from the perfumed gardens, a

deep, solemn, vibrating sound reaches even unto me.

And that soft, only sound is for me the voice of a giant, which, in the silence of the night, rises from its tomb of glory.

Because that voice is the sound of the bell of the *Vela*.

At the sound of that historic bell past ages return and pass before my view, and the Queen of the West, the city of a thousand towers, the Damascus of Europe—Granada—rises before me with her crown of castles; her gilded turrets and her wide embattled space extending upon seven hills.

It seems to me that the Spirit of Islam watches upon the summit of the weather vane, contemplating the jewel of the Arabs; that beyond, in the open plains, the royal camps are lighting their bivouac fires in Santa Fé, and that the Christian watchguard is sharpening his wide lance upon the stones of the boundary wall, whilst he gazes, beneath the fantastic moonbeams, upon the Eastern city and the Alcazar of wonders.

Come, Spirit of the Alhambra!

Thou who hast presided over my Oriental

dreams; thou who hast revealed to me the treasures which thou watchest over and guardest with jealous care; come, with thy golden guzla, in which the genius of harmony is imprisoned, and regale my ears.

May the light from thine eyes illumine me, and the ambrosial perfume of thy breath be distilled over me.

Come, beloved of my soul! Let me see thy black flowing tresses glistening like an aureola of resplendencies around thy virginal brow when moved by the zephyr.

Come! for my head is burning, and my thoughts are dry and arid like a spark from the fire.

Dost thou not hear in space sonorous noises? Dost thou not heed the neighing of the caparisoned horses, the clanking of the Moorish trappings, and the light rustling sound of the wind as it flutters the transparent veils of the slaves of the harem?

It is midnight: the hour when the Hades rise from the lakes and pass before the moon's rays and become lost in the dark leafing of the woods: the hour in which the flowers exhale their purest perfumes, and the ena-

moured birds caress each other in their nests.

And I watch mean time : come, and thou shalt watch with me.

I love thee as I love glory, and thou art mine : only mine.

For me alone hast thou thine enchanting dreams, thy Alcazares of gold, and thy grottoes of diamonds ; thy histories of Kings and Sultanas, thy fierce combats, and thy songs of love.

Come, my beautiful one, my beloved, light of my spirit.

My poet's pen breaks the seal which imprisons thee. I invoke thee ! Come, rise before me !

* * * *

And the moon widened her resplendent disc until its orb filled the abyss.

And she tore open her bosom, and sending forth a ray, a beautiful damsel descended with it even to me.

Her jet-black hair was encircled by a crown of pearls, and her face, covered by the finest veil, was as beautiful as the moon when a filmy cloud passes before its orb.

Her countenance shone with a powerful and divine spirit, and from her celestial eyes came forth intense, yet soft, gleams, which filled the surrounding air.

An ineffable smile played around her lips. The soft heaving of her bosom and the magic power of her beauty would have made the very genius of indifference die of love.

And her dress was that of a Sultana.

Her shoulders and form were enwrapped in a caftan of violet damask, shot with silver, embroidered with fantastic white and gold arabesque ornaments.

Her elaborately-worked sky-blue tunic, fastened with clasps of amethysts and sapphires, and edged with pearls, was resplendent as the light, and so wide and flowing that it concealed her tiny feet, encased in slippers of morocco leather.

Around her throat she wore a necklace of brilliants, and her white rounded arms were lost in a cloud of gold and silken gauze, which was as subtle as the web that the tiny inoffensive spider of the garden weaves upon the petals of flowers.

In her hand shone a guzla of gold, and her

armlets were powerful talismans, upon which were written in cuneiform characters the Name of God.

How beautiful art thou, daughter of dreams!

Thy garments are of light, and thy eyes shine above them all !

Thy waist is narrow and lithe, like the stem of the palm-tree, and when thou movest it waves like the roses in a perfumed vase which are stirred by the light morning air.

Thou art the beloved of Allah, and happiness dwells with thee.

Allah-Akbar! I am the genius of the *Palace of Pearls*.* I jealously preserve each shred which time and destruction tears from its regal robes. Yet, though it may become blotted out from the face of earth, I, who am its spirit, will preserve it in all its splendour within the abyss of the past.

Come with me : I will envelope thee in my mantle, and seat thee upon my throne of clouds, upon Granada of the Arabs.

I will drive away the present by the harmonies from my guzla, and I will invoke the past.

* *The Alhambra*.

Come with me : I have awakened it from where it slept beneath the golden cupolas of the Palace of Pearls, with the echoes of thy steps as they wandered under the stalactites of the *Chamber of Lions*. (See Note I.)

I will sing to thee a history of tears : I will show thee the sons of Granada covered with the trappings and gear of the combats : I will show thee her daughters veiled with the weavings of the East. I will make this history, coming from my guzla for thee, to rise like the soft perfume of myrrh and aloes burnt in a firepan of gold.

I will evoke for thee Granada of other days, because Granada is dead ; and all that remains of her are the bones of her skeleton.

Pride oppressed the desert with the weight of the Pyramids : whole generations placed stones upon stones, and they strengthened it with mortar of blood, in order that the tempest and the hurricane should not dash them down.

And insolently and boldly they defied time.

Time, however, cast at their base the drift impelled by the Simoom (see Note II.), and the Pyramids are dwarfed.

When a few more ages shall have passed, the sands of the desert will have covered them as a corpse is buried.

The Arabs designed to leave their histories written in the West, and upon Granada they spread one of its most beautiful pages.

They thought Granada would have subsisted throughout ages, yet time has worm-eaten her foot.

Do not seek her; her royal standard has been wrenched by the hurricane, as well as the lofty tower which supported it.

No longer is heard in the plains the rough gallop of the horse which carried the fierce almogawar, nor does the Almoravid joustier break his lance of two blades against the Christian shield.

Her ramparts were breached and broken down; her Alcazares were submerged, and her baths blocked up.

The Darro and the Genil murmur sorrowfully as they meander their currents amid the luxuriant gardens; and under the leafy nut-trees no longer do the daughters of Ismael dance, nor the lute and clarion resound in the Zambra.

Do not seek Granada : Granada has ceased to exist.

All that remains of her is her mutilated Alhambra, which is now fast crumbling.

Her last remains will soon be mingled with the dust of ruin, and over her the tempest will rage and sweep, and she will become covered with the mud from its inundation.

And when the believer returns—for he will return, because so it is written—he will ascend the hill and seek in vain the Alcazar of his grandsires.

The Alcazar ! he will tread upon the dust of its ruins without knowing it ; like the absent son, who, when he returns seeking the tomb of his father, walks unconsciously upon his ashes, not finding even a footprint of former greatness.

* * * *

The Christians came running in a closed squadron, spurring on their chargers until their flanks streamed with blood ; their lances in the sockets and shields upon their breasts.

They came and passed the frontiers, and

for each fathom of land which they gained they spilt torrents of blood.

The Walies * of the land lost, one by one, the cities and towns of the kingdom, and the Nazarites advanced until they sighted Geb-el-Solair,† and placed their royal tents in a field at the foot of Geb-el-Beira,‡ and called it Santa Fé.

They raised a wall and opened a cave, and they invested their camp with the name of City.

They awaited, that Granada, enclosed within her walls, should, defeated by her sons, open her gates to them.

And thus it happened, because so it was written.

Come with me, come : I wish to recount to thee this history of tears.

Come with me : I will envelope thee in my mantle ; I will seat thee on my throne of clouds, upon Granada of the Arabs.

And, with the harmonies from my guzla, I will drive away the present, and will evoke the past for thee.

*

*

*

*

* Governors.

† Sierra Nevada.

‡ Sierra Elvira.

And my eyes languished : an inebriating perfume suffused my being, and a soft breeze almost imperceptibly passed over my face.

I felt that I was being ravished up through the air, and a delightful harmony sounded in my ears.

I opened my eyes, and they became wounded by the first dazzling rays of a resplendent sun, which was rising in the midst of golden vapours behind the white heights of the Veleta.

I was seated upon a cloud of purple and gold.

Upon this cloud the genius of the Alhambra was playing her guzla.

And at my feet I saw a Moorish city.

An Alcazar, facing a mountain, cast brilliant reflections from her golden turrets, and her network of towers and walls enclosed other Alcazares and baths, houses and gardens, like to a pomegranate, which hides ruddy fruits within.

And beyond and around I saw a plain, rich with fountains and verdure ; and, like a velvet carpet interwoven with silver threads, two rivers, which had their origin in the moun-

tain, flowed, murmuring, and after bathing the walls of the city, embraced each other, and mingled their currents into one, traversed the meadow like a gigantic serpent of brilliant scales, and was ultimately lost in the distance.

And I descended into an Alcazar, such as has not been seen by human eyes.

A gentle breeze rippled the waters of its lakes, and the spirits of harmony, of beauty, and love pervaded the perfumed air of the shady gardens, the lofty galleries, the silent retreats, and within echoing chambers.

And within its walls there was no spot which was not shining, nor a flower which did not exhale a delicious fragrance, nor a retreat which did not invite to repose.

Clear, limpid water flowed from the jets of the alabaster fountains, and fell in loud cascades upon the marble pavements.

From golden firepans ascended white transparent clouds, formed by the essence of the perfumes brought from the East.

It was the Alhambra; not as it is now, ravished by the hand of time and of neglect; but the Alhambra of Boabdil and of Muza-Ebn-Abil Gazan, fresh, and resonant with

the rippling of fountains and the song of birds.

It was the Alcazar of the Zambras, the golden book wherein was written, in pearly characters, the word of God.

And the beautiful genius of the Alcazar conducted me into a chamber which was larger than the rest.

The pavement was of the richest Mosaic ; the walls were open with alhamies and arched windows adorned by Persian work and fantastic transparencies, through which came a soft light.

And, coyed by that dreamy atmosphere, I rested upon a downy alkatifa ; * and the spirit came and sat close to me, played the guzla, and sang.

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

* A soft carpet.



II.

THE KING ABU-ABD-ALLAH EL ZOGOIBI.*

It was the hour when the night-watchers were reclining their heavy heads upon their breasts and the early cock was crowing.

The morning star was shining in the east, and a dim light hemmed the heights of the mountains.

The day was rising, misty and radiant, spreading its pearly mantle of dew upon the flowers, the birds were singing in the gardens, and the muezzins in the minarets were calling the faithful to the prayer of Azobih. (See Note III.)

It was the fatal day of the first guimada

* Boabdil the unfortunate.

of the moon of Safer (see Note IV.), in the year 896 * of the Hejira.

Granada was slowly awakening, and thousand sounds which accompany day were commencing to take the place of silence.

The Alhambra, bordered by the white twilight of the dawn, revealed her crown of towers upon the Colina Roja,† like a castle, in the tales of the Hades, which is veiled by the mist.

Upon her ramparts was heard the crunching of the steel armour of the watchguard, who slowly paced the length of the turreted wall, an embossed shield on his breast and crossbows on his shoulder.

From time to time his vigilant call was heard echoed in Djench-al-arife, ‡ in the Alijares, and spread itself the whole length of the walls, until it died in the distance.

Within the Alcazar all things were in repose. Some Ethiopian slaves, resting on their long lances, stood silent and immovable at the doors of the retreats and in the corners of the halls, and seemed, by the opaque light of the nearly spent-out agate lamps fed with

* A.D. 1491.

† Red hill.

‡ Generalife.

aromatic oils, as though they were spell-bound statues.

In the Alcazar there is a gallery, which extends from the Tower of Comares (see Note V.) to the turret which overlooks the suburb of Hageriz. When the sun bathes Granada with its first rays of love, it is delightful, from this spot, to gaze upon that little garden covered with flowers, in the midst of numberless palaces, turrets, towers, and walls, which surround and rise on every side.

Further on, the view takes in the blue horizon upon the tops of Sierra Elvira and the Monte de Ainadamar, the plain studded with villages upon a rich carpet of verdure, festooned by olive groves and pleasure gardens.

Nothing of all this was then seen: the light of early morn had not yet dissipated the mantle of mist spread upon the Albaicin.

Yet by that soft light two shadows could be seen traversing the gallery. The step of the one was heavy and solemn, betokening that it proceeded from a man; the light footsteps of the other, and the rustling of a silken tunic, as it trailed on the ground, revealed that it was a woman.

They walked on until they reached the turret; the woman then fastened a rope-ladder to a column, and the man descended by it.

The small echo of the woman's voice appeared to have been lost in the silence—that voice which had said to the man, “To-night, in Generalife, when the muezzin calls the faithful to the prayer of Alaja.”

Yet these words were wafted on the wings of a gust of wind, as the man reached the foot of the wall.

The woman then drew up the rope, and concealed it in her mantle. She returned by that gallery, passed close to the Chamber of Comares, descended a flight of stairs, and entered the Retreat of the Divans. (See Note VI.)

With noiseless footsteps she glided upon its Persian carpet, embroidered with silk and gold; and from the lamps of porphyry shot rays of light up the walls, inlaid with wondrous work. Amid hazy clouds of perfume, a beauteous being reclined upon the velvet of the richest divan—a radiant beam of joy, wrapped in a dream of happiness, did that woman seem.

She was very beautiful.

Pensively she reposed upon the alkatifas of the divan.

Her hair, plaited with pearls, fell upon the cushion and framed her pure brow; smooth, majestic eyebrows, which were perfectly arched, crowned her blue eyes, from which, in obedience to some hidden thought, two gentle tears flowed upon her cheeks, from which the lily and the rose would fain have robbed of their whiteness and pale carmine.

The woman who had entered this retreat paused as she stood before the being who rested upon the divan. Her low voice, tremulous from fear and respect, broke the silence of the divan.

“Powerful Sultana,” she said, “pearly lamp shining with the light of thy beauty. The steed which bears the Abencerraje is fast speeding away: the morning mists already envelope him.”

“But the Abencerraje will return to see the Sultana in Generalife, when the night spreads her shades, and the muezzin from the turrets calls the faithful to the prayer of Alaja.”

The voice of the slave was hushed, and

the voice of the Sultana was heard, which made the dark nightingales enclosed in golden cages awake with joy. "Oh! I have dreamed," she said, "I have seen near me Aben-Hamet. Yes, it was he; I have seen his jet-black eyes, his fair mouth, his red caftan. His almaizar* has rustled against my tunic, and his hand has pressed mine."

"Oh, yes, let him go to-night to Genera-life; it is expedient that he should leave."

"I am the Sultana; vive Abu-Abd-Allah!"

The Sultana bent her head over her breast, and then turned to the slave.

"Go: the day is rising, and the King approaches."

Slow footsteps were heard traversing the hall of Lindaraja (see Note VII.), the slave quitted the apartment by a narrow door which led to the baths at the same moment that the curtain was drawn aside and a man appeared before the Sultana. She arose and approached respectfully, bending low before him.

"The day-dawn has not yet diffused her light," he said, "and has the spirit of good dreams already left thee, Zoraida? Dost

* A gauze veil worn by Moors on festive occasions.

thou watch, my gazelle, light of mine eyes? Thy cheeks will become pale with watching, and thy husband will no longer rejoice in thy dazzling looks."

"Thou also, my lord, dost watch, and watching is robbing the colour from thy countenance, and the light from thine eyes. Come and rest, my lord; thy spouse will strike the guzla, and slaves will watch the sleep of the King."

"No, Sultana; go encircle thy brow with jewels and richly robe thyself: the lists wait, for this is to be a grand day. Zegries and Abencerrajes will joust in Bib Rambla, and, forgetful of ill-will, Granada will wrestle with the Christian."

The King threw himself upon the divan in an indolent manner, whilst the Sultana remained standing.

"Come, rose of Hiram, come and sit by my side," said the King, casting his heavy eyes upon Zoraida. "The daylight is still weak, and the winds do not yet bring me the sound of the drums of war of my valiant Muza. Come, sit near me, Sultana, because I love thee as I love the houris of the seventh

heaven, and thy lips distil aromatic honey quaffed in the fragrant flowers of the garden of love."

"Oh! if thou didst not love the King Abu-Abd-Allah, whom traitorous vassals surround, whom Christians insult, raising walls before his kingly standard. . . . Oh! if thou didst not love me, my heart would break as the glass is broken with poison. Then might thou rightly call me in contempt the Zogoibi." *

The cheeks of the Sultana became suffused, and her heart trembled like the tops of the palm-trees of Africa, which become agitated when the soft aromatic winds of spring sweep over them.

She trembled, because many moons had passed since she, her beauty neglected, Sultana without husband, mother bereft of children, had heard other words than the trembling respectful ones of her slaves, and the wild words of the Abencerraje Aben-Hamet.

Abu-Abd-Allah, weak vacillating spirit, senseless miserable man, had given himself up to his destiny, and the best hours of his life were spent in indolence and pleasure;

* The hapless one.

listlessly confiding his reputation and honour as King and spouse to his brother, the brave Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan, and to the hapless Zoraida, that priceless flower which was withering and wasting her magic perfume among the shades of her solitary retreats.

Therefore the sweet words of the King whom she loved were like the zephyr of spring upon the royal palm-tree of the desert.

“May Allah bless thee, my King!” exclaimed the Sultana. “May Allah bless thee; for thou hast come as welcome to me as the sun upon the flowers. May Allah bless thee, my husband, because I love thee as I love my dreams of bliss, as I cherish my thoughts of love, as I love the light and the tulip flowers which languish as I do when the sun turns upon distant horizons the brilliant disc of its glory and the light of its life.”

And the Sultana, full of joy and love, fell into the arms of the King.

The spent-out lamps one by one became extinguished, the dawn, which was already becoming more radiant, timidly penetrated through the transparent fretwork of the cupola into the Chamber of Divans.

And as though the light had been a signal, the muffled sound of a kettledrum was heard ; at first almost lost in the distance, then by degrees it came nearer, and then was heard perfectly distinct.

Gradually that noise swelled, the light became clearer, the birds began to sing, and a golden expanded reflection brilliantly lit up the gilded stalactites of the cupola. Heavy footsteps of armed men were then heard, clanking of spurs, the grating of lances upon the pavements, the neighing of horses, and the sound of añafles.*

The King rose from his divan.

“Sultana, they are approaching : go, for the eyes of slaves must not rest upon the light of thy beauty.”

Zoraida bent low before the King, smiling from happiness, and proceeded to leave the apartment in the direction of the baths. (See Note VIII.)

The King remained slumbering under the cloud of perfume which rose from the golden fire-pans.

And he forgot that the Christians besieged

* A musical pipe used by the Moors.

the royal city, that they ravaged his fields, and that the crimson cloud of his horoscope floated in a prophetic space, close upon its setting among sweeping torrents of blood.

His weak spirit dilated, he gazed with pleasure upon the first rays of the sun which were penetrating into the chamber ; he listened to the song of the nightingale, the rippling of the fountains, and the then far distant rumble of arms and drums, with all the joy of imbecility.

“ Oh, let them come here ! ” he said ; “ this indeed is Eden ! Here it is where the breath of life floats, and the day brings its brilliant rays ! Yes ; they will come ! they will come widening their longing eyes ; but they will not place their feet upon my alkatifas, because the hand of Islam has not yet descended from the arched circle to touch the key of the *Puerta del Juicio*.* (See Note IX.) Here I am King, the lord of power, before whom beauties and slaves bend.”

And he went to the door, raised the curtain, and called four slaves, who, on hearing the King's voice, entered in and prostrated themselves before him.

* The Great Gate of Justice.

“Water, perfumes, robes, my kingly garments, my crown, and my golden sword.”

And the slaves left the chamber; but at that very moment, close behind them, appeared a handsome youth, who approached until he reached the middle of the apartment, and then prostrated himself before Abu-Abd-Allah.

He was the Emir of the Warriors of Granada—Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan.

“Rise, my valiant vassal,” said the King, “thou sword of Islam, and pillar of my throne. Why has the falcon come with the early dawn to seek the royal eagle in his nest?”

“My King,” replied Muza, “do not allow the feasts to take place to-day, because treachery lurks. Do not attend them, for they will attempt, in their rashness, to raise a mutiny at the foot of thy balconies.”

Muza remained silent after saying these words, for the slaves were entering the chamber.

At a sign from the King, two of these stood near him; a third sat on the carpet at his feet, playing the guzla; whilst a fourth uncovered

his head and proceeded to wash it with perfumed water in a golden basin.

Muza was a valiant and beautiful young man, and perhaps he was the only one left in whom was centered all that remained of noble and great in that Moorish city. Upon his shoulders he bore the weight of the civil combats of Granada, and its defence against the Christians upon the plains.

The indolent character of the King irritated him; for whilst he was besieged up to the very walls, and he himself was standing before him in battle array, yet was directing words of love to beautiful slaves, who, in a chamber redolent of perfume, were bathing his face and hands.

"Attend," he said; "attend, Sire; for this is not an occasion for doing aught else but quell the rebellion, which is rising even at the very foot of thy throne. Sire, attend, because thy Emir awaits thy commands."

"The rebellion!" contemptuously exclaimed the King, fixing his splendid blue eyes upon Muza; "the rebellion! The people are nothing else but dust, which needs a strong wind to raise from its impotence, and, like the

wind, passes without leaving a trace behind, save the furrows caused by it. The rebellion ! A terrible hurricane which can only blind those who confront it, but which can do no harm to him who turns his back and lets it pass by."

"Yet it was rebellion, Sire," replied Muza, who was as pertinacious as the King was indolent, "that cast thy father from his throne, and placed thee upon it."

"My father faced the rebellion, and he was blinded. Behold how it all happened. Listen ! naught is heard ; the hurricane sleeps, and at best, should it raise a whirlwind, will only produce some hundreds of corpses."

"The Zegries are conspiring, Sire ; the Gomeres and their friendly tribes are assisting them."

"The Gomeres are miserable foxes ; the Zegries are cowardly dogs, barking at the feet of the master who protects them."

"Sire, more than once have Abencerrajes and Zegries fought in battle against each other, as though they were not sons of the same country, and did not adore the same God."

"Muza, what am I to do ?"

“ Assist me, Sire, and I will exterminate civil discords, and place thy regal standard upon the ramparts, whilst my chargers shall tread upon the richest cities of the Christians.”

“ Perchance, art thou not my Commander, Emir ? At thy voice does not the call of alarm resound ? and the watch-fires of the turrets lit ? and at one of thy words of command do not eighty thousand warriors rise up ? Perchance, dost thou not dwell on an equal footing with me in my royal castle, and dost thou not keep eunuchs and pages covered with jewels, and horsemen with flags, and soldiery of thy own ? And dost not thou traverse the plains at will and take droves of Christians ? What more dost thou desire ? ”

“ Sire, I desire that thou listen to my voice as Emir and as a knight. I wish the King to be a king, and not a woman. I desire at once to end this shameful wrestling.”

Abu-Abd-Allah leaped up from the divan where he had finished his robing, and stood before Muza with all that majesty which at times shone in him like a dart of lightning, and, like it, passed as rapidly away.

“ Begone ! ” he said to the slaves.

Muza remained alone with Abu-Abd-Allah, upon whose severe brow the expression of indolence had vanished.

"Thou art my vassal," he cried, "and I can make thee my slave."

"I know it well, Sire," replied the Emir, without drawing back; "but I have much to complain of thee as Mussulman, as a warrior, and as a brother. Thy weakness brings upon thee the ill-will of thy own people, and they insolently insult thee, Sire; mutinies increase, and Granada is torn asunder by terrible bands. I see the ending of thy country, and thine is the blame, Sire."

"And how is it to be averted?" replied the King, at once losing all energy at the first words of Muza, who lorded over him.

"What art thou to do, Sire?" bravely exclaimed the Emir. "Dispel the belief of thy people that thou art more of a Christian than a Mussulman, and that thou art in secret league with thy enemies to deliver up the kingdom. This belief of theirs is a false one, Sire, but they know not how else to interpret thy indifference when the Christians, in marauding parties, reach even to thy walls.

King, put on thy armour ! reserve those feasts which are insulting the hunger and the discouragement of thy people, for the time when thou shalt have driven the Christians farther than the frontiers. Cast thyself upon their camps, King ! Rout them, if but for once, and thy people will acclaim thee conqueror, and the dispirited children of Islam will recover strength."

Abu-Abd-Allah sat back upon the divan which he had newly occupied, and gazed sadly upon Muza.

"No—never !" he exclaimed, striking his breast. "Here within me burns the blood of the Nazares; but, Emir, the hard star of my destiny dispirits me. It still seems to me that I am in view of Lucena, hidden and trembling among the reeds of the river, seeing my terrified squadron flying away—my broken standard and my dead horse lying at my feet. It still seems to me that I see the swords of the enemy pointing to my breast, and my lips are still burning with the humiliating confession of my rank which I had to reveal to them in order to save my life. No; I am the Zogoibi; the horoscope of my des-

tiny floats in an abyss of blood ; and if only death awaited me. : . . But captivity, dishonour. . . . No, no, by Allah ! ”

“Very well, Sire,” Muza said, touched by the grief of the unhappy King. “Countermand these feasts, from which I fear some treachery of the Zegries, and give me permission to fling myself and my almogawars upon the camp of Santa Fé.”

“The feasts shall take place ! ” the King cried. “If there are traitors, there are also beams in my towers from which to suspend their heads.”

“But how defend thee, Sire, from the treachery which is brooding behind the tapestries of thy royal chamber ? ”

The King turned pale ; he looked around him, fear in his eyes, mingled with an expression of insanity, and, rising from the divan, he tremblingly laid hold of Muza.

“Oh, yes ! ” he said, full of terror, and gazing fixedly before him, as though he saw a phantom. “The traitors—yes ! In my dreams I have seen a vision of blood ! I have seen a naked sword ! I am surrounded by

assassins, and even the sight of my own slaves inspires fear and terror ! ”

And the hapless king, pale and trembling, crossed his arms over his breast, as though to avert some invisible dagger ; then he fled from Muza, and sought refuge in a corner of the divan.

“ Brother ! oh, my brother ! ” Muza cried, throwing his arms around the King, and endeavouring to bring him back from that access of madness. “ Do not tremble, I am at thy side, my almogawars guard thy Alcazar, and my own love will defend thee.”

“ Yes, yes, thou art my brother,” the king replied, still trembling ; “ but hush ! it is a secret of our father, and if thou wert heard saying it, they would lose all faith in thee.”*

And he passed his hand over his brow, and that action seemed to have cleared his mind of its imbecility.

At that moment a noisy clamour of añafles and dulzainas was heard outside the chamber of Divans.

* It was said Muza was a son of the King Aboul-Hassen by a Christian woman.

“To the feasts!” cried the King. “My people are impatient; the knights of Granada and the ladies await me.”

“Art thou, Sire, going to the feasts?”

“Am I not guarded by thy loyal almogawars?” the King exclaimed. “If traitors exist, wilt thou not exterminate them?”

And, as though to render the King’s determination irrevocable, scarcely had he uttered these words, when the Sultana Zoraida, dazzling with jewels and beauty, appeared at the door of the chamber.

Abu-Abd-Allah stretched out his hand, took hers, and led her from the chamber of Divans to the chamber of Comares, where a splendid company of ladies and knights were waiting for them; whilst Muza, with a heavy heart, left the apartment, and disappeared by a postern of the Alcazar, mounted his horse, and placed himself at the head of five hundred almogawars, sorrowfully murmuring, “*Allah-Akbar. God is great! His Will be done!*”



III.

ZEGRIES AND ABENCERRAJES.

THE Plaza of Bib-Rambla was decked out in gala attire, and its aërial little towers, its filagree galleries, and its superb miradors were illumined by the weak sunlight of an autumn day.

Bib-Rambla was the heart and pride of Granada.

In it were continually seen all that was most beautiful and rich in the kingdom. Its bazaars, occupied by merchants from every city, held everything that could be thought of or desired.

In it were equally heard words of love and of strife ; great and noble deeds had had their

origin in them, and their profound obscurity enveloped many a mysterious deed.

But on that day the supporting pillars of the plaza were lost in tiers of seats, destined to hold all those whose good fortune it might be to attend these feasts. A strong entrenchment separated the course from the tiers of seats, and the three doors of Ab-bolut,* Zacatin, and Al-kaisseria were the ones destined for the exit of jousters and spectators.

It was very early morn, the lofty gable, the flags, and the tapestries of the royal mirador were dimly coloured by a narrow band of light.

A fresh breeze, loaded with the perfume of flowers, scarcely stirred the splendid hangings of the galleries, the tapestries of vivid colour and rare design, which hung from the balustrades of the balconies set apart for the judges, the princes, ladies, and nobles, and which descended to the very sand of the arena; but these were eclipsed by the superb folds of a brocaded curtain which fell from the King's throne, upon which was magnificently worked the escutcheon, quartered since the time of

* Of banners.

Alhhamar the Magnificent with the Kings of Granada; viz., a field of silver, and a diagonal band issuing from the mouth of a dragon, bearing the inscription, *Le galib ile Allah!* *

Notwithstanding all this splendour and festive array, the plaza was deserted, the galleries and doors closed; and only a few little birds, saluting the sun, broke with their trills the deep silence which reigned far and near.

The spacious and splendid course seemed spell-bound under the power of the enchanter's wand.

The sun arose, its rays beamed upon the deserted arena, and in the distance a confused noise of atakeberias, añafles, and drums was heard. At first the sound was low, similar to that produced by the waves of the sea as they fall upon the beach; then it increased in intensity until it swelled to a roar, which thundered until it reached the doors of the plaza, when the door of Al-kaisseria was thrown open.

One hundred Almoravid horsemen, wearing green hats and scarlet tunics, entered and

* God only is conqueror.

ranged themselves in single file on either side of the door. Behind them appeared twenty ensigns riding white horses, caparisoned as for warfare. In their hands they held small flags, and amongst them majestically waved the crimson royal standard. After these followed a troop of trumpeters, who remained stationed at the door, and sounded their trumpets three different times.

Then, as though the spell had been broken, doors and miradors were thrown open, the crowds entered, the tiers and galleries were filled with ladies, and everywhere waving veils and brilliant jewels were seen, and the silence broken by a continuous din of voices and noises.

The arena was quickly filled by a troop of horsemen, whose steeds caracoled and crowded together at the door of Al-kaisseria, through which issued the royal *cortège*, headed by the King Abu-Abd-Allah, riding a magnificent dapple grey decked with purple trappings, which trailed upon the arena.

The King wore the black robe emblematic of his rank ; between the folds of his green head-gear, twined with strings of large pearls,

rose a superb crown : his right hand held a long sharp sword ; in his buskins glistened the golden spurs of the Christian knight, and upon his breast he wore a small *blason* of Castille, in proof of the contested homage which he rendered in fealty and tribute to the noble Catholic kings since his unfortunate rout of Lucena. (See Note X.) Two wadies of the tribes Gomeras and Zegries walked by his side, holding the reins of his charger ; and behind the King and the standard of Muza, who, armed to the teeth, rode a white mare covered with mail, marched in good order five hundred almogawar horsemen encased in armour from head to foot, holding war lances, to which small flags were attached.

Another retinue followed this one, preceded by musicians and dancers.

In the centre of this retinue was seen a palanquin covered with the richest embroidery, carried on the shoulders of four slaves.

On this palanquin, reclining upon magnificent cushions and enveloped in a veil, sat a woman, the object upon which all eyes turned with universal respect. Some beautiful

Asiatic damsels, richly robed, carried censers of gold, filling the air with perfumes.

This lady was the Sultana Zoraida.

The slaves of the harem followed, also enveloped in veils and carried upon palanquins of lesser beauty, and this procession was completed by a troop of black slave guards.

The King slowly crossed the plaza, ascended the royal balcony, and occupied the throne ; on his left he seated the Sultana, at her side stood the Emir Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan holding a sword.

Behind the throne were ranged the slaves of the harem, the Katib* of the King, the Wisires, and the Kadies of the Court.

At the foot of the royal box the almogawars and the black slave guards ranged themselves in order.

The ensign of the King, holding the royal standard, and four outriders placed themselves at a short distance from the royal throne.

A general agitation prevailed, the crowd murmured : a report had spread that the feasts would end in a combat, and as far as

* Secretary.

the eye could reach nought else was seen but multitudes of human beings filling every spot upon the roofs, the galleries, the aljimeces* and balconies. The arena, free and empty, seemed enclosed in a frame of living beings, who had spread themselves everywhere and covered the wall of the plaza, and amongst which, like dazzling waves, appeared tapestries, jewels, veils, and plumes. The confused din which arose from that human sea of heads was like the buzzing of thousands of bees.

The impatient multitudes at last saw the King speaking with Muza, who, after receiving his orders, descended from the royal box. He advanced to the centre of the course, preceded by trumpeters and followed by the Alguaciles and the ensign of the King.

The trumpeters sounded their instruments three times; thousands of mouths were hushed; then the voice of Muza was heard slow and sonorous in the midst of the silence.

“Believers!” he cried, “in the name of the great and magnificent King of Granada, Mahomet Abu - Abd - Allah, the conqueror

* Moorish bow-windows.

through God, Who is the Strong Lord, the Powerful among the powerful—health to thee, his loyal and valiant vassals ! ”

A tremendous spontaneous shout was the answer to the King’s salutation. Muza then continued: “All ye that listen to me, be it known that the King wills and commands that feasts do take place in his good and loyal city of Granada, in which all who are knights, Mussulmans or Nazarenes, neighbours and strangers, and even those who come from distant lands, shall meet and run at tilts and bulls in equal contest together, with the sole and only exception of Jews and renegades.

“Also that, in order to preside at these said feasts and distribute rewards among the conquerors, a Sultana be chosen possessed of the greatest beauty amongst all present, those that may yet come from these or other kingdoms ; and the said chosen Sultana shall be the prize of the first conqueror, if he be free, and it may so please him. The judges of beauty are, the Wisir of the King, Ebn-Comija ; the Katik, Adel-Kerim ; and the Arrayaz, Ebn-Zayde. In the King’s name ! Prosperity to all faithful Mussulmans ! ”

Once again the trumpet sounded, whilst the Emir returned to the royal balcony accompanied by the King's ensign, the Alguaciles, and the trumpeters, to occupy the post conferred by the King Abu-Abd-Allah of Arbitrator in the tribunal of beauty, which tribunal was composed of the three venerable old men whose names Muza had proclaimed as Judges.

But not a single lady of all those who graced the feast descended from her balcony to dispute the supremacy of beauty.

Yet, in truth, on that day many were the beauties that had assembled together, some splendid and languid like the evening star, others bright and pure like a spring dawn, and others, again, dazzling and majestic as the sun when it sets behind the ocean in purple rays on a summer's evening ; and for one look alone from their magnificent eyes torrents of blood would have been shed, and for a kiss from their ruby lips the most valiant Aben-cerraje would have allowed himself to be called a coward.

No one had attempted to present herself before the Judges, because in the royal box a lady was seated whose face no one had be-

held, for it was covered with a thick veil, but towards whom the envious looks of the ladies of Granada were directed. Behind that ample veil a countenance was hidden which could not be otherwise than beautiful ; as only a beauty without rival could have inspired courage to hold herself in so proud manner, and manifest such movements of majesty and disdain, during the moments when so many beautiful women were called to come forth and dispute her charms.

Above her veil flashed eyes of penetrating and irresistible expression, and her wide rich tunic could not altogether conceal the elegant roundness of her form.

That woman, who made the very houris dream of her, that woman whom all knew and respected, and who rendered indisputable the supremacy of her beauty, was the spouse of the King, the Sultana Zoraida.

The King was gazing proudly upon the Sultana ; the time was passing, yet no lady had stepped forward to claim the throne of love and beauty. The impatient crowds commenced to murmur. Again was the cry repeated, yet the ladies remained immovable.

Then the King rose, radiant with pride and joy, and taking the hand of Zoraida, drew back her veil, and presented her to the Judges, demanding in her behalf the declaration of "Sultana of Beauty."

Her majestic demeanour, the power of her looks, the chaste form of her mouth, the purity of her serene brow, and the silky softness of the tresses which crowned it, drew an exclamation of surprise from all those who had not previously seen her.

A score of times had the spring brought her its flowers; for the twentieth time had the swallows come with the summer to admire her beauty, since the day when the genii had presided over her birth. Each spring had bereft itself of an "immortelle" to enrich her crown of beauty and add a new charm; the woman whom Allah placed in Paradise could not have been more perfect.

Such a display of magnificence and her great beauty made the crowd forget their impatience, and Zoraida, saluted by noisy cheering, approached the Judges.

After a brief deliberation, the old men found that the Sultana of Granada was also

the Sultana of Beauty; and their decision was that the King should yield up his throne to the double majesty.

And so it was done. Zoraida occupied the King's throne in the midst of a perfect storm of acclamations, and the King sat on her left upon a lower seat.

For the third time the trumpeters sounded their harsh-sounding clarions; the feast which had been so greatly desired was about to commence.

A door under the tier of seats which fronted the royal balcony was thrown open, and through it emerged ten blacks of the King's guards, riding white colts, with ornamental harness. These blacks wore caftans, hats, shields, and upon their robes carried the King's device, and in their hands little red flags.

Ten pages on foot followed, also robed in red and gold, leading ten white mares harnessed in a similar manner to those which had preceded them.

Behind the pages came six Africans enveloped in ample alquiceles,* and in their

* A species of cloak or mantle worn by the Moors.

midst cavalcaded a young man of robust form and sparkling eyes.

He was dressed in a richly-brocaded robe of blue and red, and from his hat pended plumes of great value; upon his breast glistened a gold escutcheon, upon which was depicted, in enamel, a savage sustaining a globe, and bearing the motto in silver characters upon green ground, of *Con mas puedo* ("I can sustain more").

This valiant knight was Aben-Hamet, the leader of the Abencerrajes, a man who was feared and respected wherever a standard was raised, or the bravest of the Knights of Granada assembled together.

Notwithstanding the proclamation which had been issued, that any one was at liberty to enter the lists, and step into the plaza, no one had as yet dared to compete as a rival with the respected Aben-Hamet; and therefore he alone went forward before the throne of beauty, to salute the Sultana, and ask the favour of her permission to be the champion of the feast.

A burning blush suffused the cheeks of Zoraida as she threw a golden key which she

held in her fair white hand into the hat of Aben-Hamet, held out for it with trembling hands, as a sign that she conceded the favour.

Then, saluting the King, he started at full gallop to the extreme end of the course, in order to deliver the key to an alguacil, who proceeded with it towards a small door.

The retinue of Aben-Hamet meanwhile disappeared behind the entrenchment; the six Africans formed a circle before the door which was to be opened, and the champion, taking a heavy spear, placed himself at the side.

The trumpets were about to sound; the immense crowds were in silent attention, when the harsh blast of a trumpet was three times heard athwart the door of Al-Kaisseria, and its keeper, riding a Cordovan steed, advanced towards the royal box, and making the beast kneel down, said to Zoraida, "Powerful Sultana of Beauty and of Granada, four Zegri Knights ask permission to enter the course, and spear the first bull."

Zoraida turned pale, whilst Muza convulsively grasped the hilt of his sword.

"As they are Knights and Zegries," replied the Sultana, checking the tremulousness of

her voice, "open the door, and let them come up to me."

The governor bowed, backed his horse, and with slow, respectful pace proceeded to the door, without turning his back upon the Sultana.

But at that moment another blast from a trumpet vibrated behind the door of Albolut, and its keeper or governor approached, crossing the course, and in an agitated voice said to the Sultana—

"Lady, four Abencerraje Knights also ask permission of thee to spear the first bull."

"Let the door be freely opened to them," the Sultana rejoined, with a degree of interest.

The governor, without heeding or caring whether he turned his back upon the Sultana, sped across the course like a dart of lightning, reaching his door, which was that of Albolut, at the same time as the other reached that of Al-Kaisseria. Both doors were then opened simultaneously, and from each door issued at the same moment four horsemen, who dashed across the course, and stood before the throne of beauty, stopping their horses on a line, and darting angry looks at each other.

“Clear the way for the Zegries!” said those who had entered by the door of Al-Kaisseria.

“Clear the way for the Abencerrajes!” replied the others.

“We descend from the lineage of the knights of Cordova, by Allah!”

And the eight knights started their horses, at the same time grasping the hilts of their swords.

The King rose up, Muza advanced, Aben-Hamet spurred his mare, and it was feared the moment for coming to blows had arrived.

But the Sultana calmly arose, and extending majestically her arm towards the disputants, said slowly and distinctly, in a solemn voice—

“Knights! ye all have my permission. May Allah assist ye, and grant ye victory!”

And the knights, controlled by the accents and gesture of the Sultana, drew their hands from the hilts of their swords, saluted Zoraida, and, casting upon each other looks of fiery hatred, went off in different directions to take their posts close to the door from whence the bull was to emerge.

It was a brave animal, reared in the thickets

of Ronda, light as the wind, fierce, and well armed for offence. It stood in the centre of the arena, glaring around with fierce looks, which had been provoked by the hissing and the cries of the multitude.

The men stood up, the women fluttered their handkerchiefs, the alguacils, who stood in front of the royal mirador, fixed their terror-stricken eyes upon the brute, and prepared to escape at the first sign of danger.

Meanwhile the eight Zegries and Abencerrajes had armed themselves with small spears, and the bravest of them, surrounded by the Africans, riding at a trot, approached the bull, which slowly turned, lashed its flanks with its tail, and lowered its powerful enormous head as though to salute its adversary. Then it slowly drew back, pawing the sand about in all directions with its short, powerful limbs, and bellowed a deep defiant roar.

All eyes were fixed upon the beast, and every tongue was struck dumb during these moments.

At length the bull flew like a javelin and attacked the Zegri, whose spear split, saving

the distance which separated him from the bull, and slightly grazing its loin.

A thundering roar then arose in the air, the mare and its rider both rolled over, and six *alquicetes*, or red cloaks, were flaunted between the vanquished knight and the conquering beast.

The bull, deceived by the lure, followed the Africans, thus giving the Zegri an opportunity of mounting another mare in order to renew the contest.

The countenance of the Moor wore a terrible expression. It seemed as though the evil genius of wrath and humbled pride had taken possession of his soul; and, livid, trembling with fury, his teeth clenched, and with bloodshot eyes, he cast a look of contempt upon the crowd, which was applauding the bull, and then directed another look, which was perfectly indescribable, at the Abencerrajes, who were watching him with the insolent smile of an enemy who delights to witness the disgrace and humiliation of an adversary.

The Zegri started to renew the encounter; and the bull, without giving him time to cast

his spear, fiercely attacked him, threw down the mare, and, without heeding the decoy of the red cloaks, fell upon both rider and horse.

Blood flowed; the expiring Zegri was thrice tossed in the air by the terrible horns, and as often fell mortally wounded. The bull then turned and attacked another Abencer-raje, who was advancing, treating him in the same manner as the Zegri.

Then the six remaining knights marched around the beast, which, as though protected by a superior power, contemned their spears, attacking the riders and placing them *hors de combat*, threw down the outriders, and finally wounded itself by running towards the almogawars and the black slave guard, who received him with the points of their long lances, many of which were, however, broken by the encounter.

Four knights of the tribe of the Mazas and four of the tribe of the Gomeres came forward into the course, and, after asking permission, advanced towards the bull.

These again, like the former ones, fell before the beast.

Terror began to take possession of every one: the bull was master of the arena. No one else dared to present himself before it, and the bull, like an athlete who prepares himself, after a combat, for another contest by resting, threw itself on the ground, then pricked up its ears, listening attentively, casting a restless look around.

It was a disgrace for the Knights of Granada to look upon the abandoned course with impassive indifference, and to behold a bull which had dared to lay down to repose with such unseemly and insufferable insolence. Feelings full of ire were roused in the hearts of some, who, confiding in the skill of their arm and in the luck of their good star, rode up to the royal throne, obtained the desired permission, and entered the lists.

It was a worthy sight to behold those brave young disputants, one by one at the mercy of the swiftness of their steeds, disputing for the honour of being the next to cast his spear upon the beast prepared for renewing the contest.

Yet it was indeed sad to behold rolling on the arena those accomplished knights, who

in many battles had steeped the blades of their swords up to the very hilt, and had conferred days of glory and renown to Granada in their conquests against the Christians.

And they all fell—the bull tore them down one by one, like the fierce tempest lays flat the sheaves of corn, and the so-called feast was fast becoming a spectacle of horror.

The ladies swooned away; the valiant knights swore; the assembled multitude yelled; the King was sorely afflicted to see his knights uselessly shedding their blood; whilst the bull meanwhile was masterfully walking about the arena strewn with the dead and the dying.

Terror increased; no one dared to wrestle with that terrible beast which the iron blade could not vanquish, and which only became infuriated by punishment.

Time passed; the champion ordered the trumpets to be sounded, and by this means called three times for fresh combatants.

A long time they waited; the King's brow became darkened; for the first time had such a disgraceful scene taken place in Granada, of a danger left unchallenged.

The entrenchment was opened, and Aben-

Hamet, the gallant champion, appeared on foot; his left arm was enveloped by an alquicel, or red cloak, and his right hand held a long wide sword.

The moment for the supreme effort had arrived. A deep silence pervaded; the whole of the assembled crowds in the miradors, the galleries, and upon the balustrades were mute with expectation.

In the royal box, Zoraida, pale as death, was fixing an anxious look upon Aben-Hamet. Muza was frowning, and the King appeared distraught and absorbed by strange thoughts.

The leader of the Abencerrajes with elegant demeanour crossed the course and approached the royal box. He knelt upon one knee, threw his cap down, and said to Zoraida—

“By Allah, and by thy beauty, noble Sultana, I shall not cover my head with this cap until I have laid at thy feet the tuft on the head of that haughty beast.”

“May Allah protect thee, brave knight!” blushing replied the Sultana.

And Aben-Hamet directed his steps towards the centre of the arena, the valiant blood of his veins all on fire, and trembling with

pride. He challenged the beast, and after sparring with him three times, he at length thrust the point of his sword right into the nape of its neck. The bull drew back, and in another moment man and beast were both rolling on the arena enveloped in a cloud of dust; but before it had subsided, the man rose up safe and sound, displaying amongst the folds of his cloak the sword covered with blood, and in his right hand he waved aloft the tufted ornament which had adorned the head of the beast.

The bull lay dead, and a stream of blood flowed from the wide gaping wound which the Abencerraje had inflicted in its neck.

The tufted ornament was laid at the feet of the Sultana by Aben-Hamet, who then raised his cap from the ground, mounted his steed, and started at full gallop towards the door, to await the exit of the second bull.

The deed which the brave Abencerraje had accomplished caused a profound sensation, and thousands of voices were raised acclaiming conqueror the gallant knight, and demanding that he should be rewarded by the Sultana of Beauty.

But Zoraida, through a crier, declared that such a favour could not be conceded to one who had only distinguished himself in one trial. She ordered that the forthcoming contests with bulls be suspended, and running at tilts should at once be commenced.

The crowds murmured; twelve bulls yet remained to be brought out and despatched; and the crowds anticipated less enjoyment from witnessing the games which were about to take place than they had promised themselves from the bull-fights, forgetful already of the tragic ending of the first encounter.

Sand was strewn over the arena, and all the gore covered over.

The trumpets again sounded, and at this signal all the knights who were to take part and enter the lists descended from the galleries and miradors, where they had been witnessing the terrible scene.

The knights who presented themselves were from two bands only, Zegries and Abencerrajes.

The moment so greatly dreaded by the Emir Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan was fast approaching.

Those two bands were deadly enemies since

the day when Granada had become divided into two parties ; one in favour of the sons of the Sultana Zoraya (see Note XI.), and the other in behalf of Abu-Abd-Allah, son of the haughty Sultana Aixa. These were entering together and meeting in a common list.

Although Muza expected generosity and greatness of soul from the knights of the Abencerrajes, yet he dreaded everything from the Zegries, a low-born race of the desert, possessing passions as violent as the deadly blast of the simoom, treacherous like the jackal, and thirsting for blood like the royal tiger of Senaar.

The Emir, ever a noble and generous knight, at the first sound of the trumpet mounted his horse and placed himself at the head of his army of wild and ferocious almogawars, his face shielded by a vizor, and his lance of double blades clenched as though ready to enter the battle-field.

At the second sounding of the trumpets both doors were opened, and the Zegries and Abencerrajes, arrayed after the fashion of tournaments, in gala dresses and rich brocades, entered the course four abreast.

The Zegries were led by Mahomet-Adel-Zegri.

They rode colts of pure Arab breed, black as night, fiery like flashes of lightning, and swift as the sweeping hurricane. The Zegries, in order to provoke the Abencerrajes, were insulting them by adopting the colours of their trappings. They had robed themselves in *aljubas*,* *marlotas*,† and *almaizares* of crimson and scarlet brocade, and tufts of blue plumes adorned their headgear.

The Abencerrajes wore caftans and scarves of green brocade, as an emblem of firm hope, and from their richly-chased helmets waved large crests of yellow plumes in token of their good-will. The horse-cloths of their snow-white mares were of the same colour, and the standard they carried fluttered proudly, borne by such illustrious champions.

Before them proceeded the youthful and brave Aben-Hamet, riding a Persian steed, white and swift as a swan's feather. He was flushed and full of pride at having obtained

* *Aljubas*: a Moorish garment, formerly used by Christians in Spain.

† A kind of Moorish dress.

his signal triumph in the presence of the Sultana, the beloved of his soul.

For the third time did the trumpets resound through space their sharp vibrating call. It seemed as though that ringing sound conveyed courage and fire into both horses and riders.

The sun was casting its flashing rays upon the brightly-polished armour. Ill-will and hatred flashed from the eyes of both inimical tribes, as each, endeavouring to outvie the other in elegance of demeanour, advanced caracoling before the royal box, where they made their skilful beasts bend their knees before Zoraida.

The Sultana smiled, and cast her golden staff upon the lists, endeavouring to overcome and conceal the deep anxiety which reigned in her bosom.

At that signal the closed crowd of Abencer-rajes and Zegries divided themselves and formed a wide circle, passing under the tiers of seats and galleries like brilliant cascades of gold and silk. They marked the distances, and placed themselves in fours, one tribe opposite the other.

Young and beautifully-dressed pages then brought them tilts, and the signal was given for the jousting to commence. Both brilliant companies began their movements.

They crossed each other in every direction, and a shower of tilts, adorned with flags and bows, flew from one end of the course to the other, and were broken against the adversaries' shields. They deftly formed themselves into equestrian arabesques and circular designs ; they joined, and commenced anew the contest in concentric circles. The ladies threw flowers upon the knights and the crowds shouted their enthusiastic applause.

Suddenly the shield-bearer of the Zegries, armed with weapons of war, bounded across the entrenchment and approached the knights.

Treachery was openly manifesting itself. The tilts became lances ; an Abencerraje fell to the ground wrenched from his saddle and mortally wounded.

The squadron of almogawars, at a sign from their leader Muza, provided themselves with war lances, and the Abencerrajes rushed upon the Zegries.

The King rose up from his throne and threw in vain his golden staff. The Abencerrajes were far too gallant to shrink from the encounter, and so they charged the enemy, notwithstanding that they carried no greater defence than their silken robes.

Aben-Hamet was the first to throw his lance upon Mahomet-Adel-Zegri. The weapon hit direct at the breast of the Zegri, but rebounded, broken into splinters. It had struck the coat of mail which he wore concealed beneath the richly-brocaded robes.

And the same happened with all the rest of the Abencerrajes, whilst the lances of the Zegries threw a man down to the ground at each blow.

At this new treachery offered to the Abencerrajes, cries of "Vengeance to the Zegries for their treachery to the Abencerrajes!" filled the course, compelling the knights who were assisting at the feasts to take their side with either band.

When the hour of Adohar approached, the plaza offered an imposing spectacle. Those on the side of the Zegries entered the arena, forcing the guards at the doors; the ladies

fled from the galleries; and the men of the noble city of bravery, who knew the generosity and justice of the Abencerrajes, entered the lists in order to repulse the traitors who were crying, "Death to the King Abu-Abd-Allah and to the Abencerrajes!"

Then, when the combat became inevitable, when all good Mussulmans gathered around the King, who, rising superior to his indolence, mounted his steed and marched behind his royal standard, the Emir Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan was seen to draw himself up, set spurs to his charger, brandish his lance, and in a terrible voice which silenced the tumult cried out, "Away with ye! I alone am sufficient for this traitor. Out with ye all!"

And he attacked the band of Zegries, piercing their leader, Mahomet-Adel-Zegri.

"Ah! is it thou?" he cried, "thou, wretch and renegade, the cause of the routing of Lucena and of the civil bands. Take that, thou infidel dog; take the price of thy treachery!"

And though Muza received upon his damascened shield a blow from the Zegri, yet he levelled the point of his lance at his throat, and, notwithstanding his cuirasse, pierced him through.

Then with uplifted sword he attacked the rebels. And like the hurricane lays flat the tall cedars, the lightning strikes down the lofty towers, and the current that carries everything before it, so did the Emir with equal rapidity cast down and kill all who came across his path.

The mutiny was becoming general. Muza ordered the trumpets to sound, and putting forward the standard, the almogawars, following their brave leader, fell upon the traitors like a terrible tempest, sweeping all before them.

The Zegries, finding themselves vanquished, fled to take refuge in the Castle of Bib-Rambla, carrying with them the dead body of their leader, Mahomet-Adel-Zegri; and those who could not save themselves by flight were exterminated by the loyal followers and vassals of the King Abu-Abd-Allah.

Blood, torn trappings, and broken weapons were all that remained of this exploit of the Zegries.

The King returned to his throne, and Aben-Hamet, always calm, approached the Sultana as she was recovering from the fainting

fit which the sight of that terrible spectacle had thrown her into. Zoraida opened her beautiful eyes and bestowed upon the Abencerraje a look of profound gratitude.

“To-night, in Generalife!” the enamoured youth whispered in her ear.

The Sultana coloured up and remained silent.

A little later, the King and the Sultana, accompanied by Aben-Hamet and Muza, the Abencerrajes and the almogawars, bent their steps towards the Alhambra, followed by a retinue whose festive garments were covered with dust and blood.

Scarcely had the King entered into the Alcazar when a Captain of the Zegries, accompanied by a trumpeter who displayed a white flag, demanded an audience of the King.



IV.

THE CYPRESS OF THE SULTANA.

A GARDEN of delights, a perennial fountain, a perfect echo of harmony, a forest of love, and the place for Zambras, was Generalife when Granada swayed a powerful kingdom.

And amongst the laurel thickets birds sang, and never did the burning rays of the sun scorch that spot, nor the biting cold and snow of winter visit it.

In its streams swam fishes of varied hues, and its waters fell in cascades, wafting the rippling sounds even to the golden apartments of the magnificent retreats, and inviting to dreams of peace and delight.

It is there where the gigantic cypress grows which was planted by the King Abul-

Walid the Magnificent (See Note XII.), in order to gratify the caprice of a slave; at the foot of this tree are little woods of roses and myrtles, extending to the very edge of a lake of the clearest water.

How many assignations of love have been witnessed and watched over in the silence of the night and in the shades of the thickets by that gigantic tree, which was transplanted from the mountains of Jericho to Granada!

How often has the lover's dagger carved upon its hard bark the name of a gentle, adored damsel! and how often has the traveller and the stranger broken off a sprig from that historic tree!

Thou still livest! Thou still standest there—a monument of an unfortunate, hapless race!

And thou dost still raise thy lofty waving tops above the group of towers like a green turret which the hand of God has preserved upon the gifted land of Granada; albeit, a mute witness of her greatness of other days which has passed away never to return! And now only the sun knows thee!

That brilliant sun of Andalusia, which can

never be destroyed but by the hand of God, and which, at setting in the evening, darts its well-known faint, expiring rays upon thee !

And each clear night the moon sends thee her kiss of love, and when she is absent from thee—because, bestowing her light upon distant hemispheres, she cannot shed over thee her white, filmy light—the stars tremulously salute thee, thou ancient tree ! Thou who hast been for generations a verdant Alcazar to thousands of birds, and at thy foot still pass the vanquished as well as the conquering races !

Sultanas and slaves, kings and princes, neighbours and strangers, have lingered near thee, and tottering old men and innocent damsels have recounted to thee a history of love which took place under thy shades during a night when the moon shone filling every space, and serene like the eyes of God.

I wish amongst my songs to preserve that history, which is sad and languid like a sigh—capricious and vague like a remembrance !

* * * *

It was late ; the voice of the muezzins had sounded in space, from the heights of the

turrets, their pious call to the faithful to come to the prayer of Alaja.*

It was the night of that fatal day when the blood of brave men had dyed the sands of the arena of Bib-Rambla.

And it was one of those serene, calm nights when the tepid resplendency of the moon fell softly upon the land, inviting to meditation and to love.

The night breeze carried upon its impalpable wings the soft, sweet fragrance of the gardens; the waters flowed and fell with sonorous noise, their currents lost in the obscurity of the leafy woods, wherein slumbered the genius of mystery.

Generalife was a dazzling sight; its refulgence cast a fantastic aureola of vapoury light upon its slated roofs.

Precious lamps of exquisite colours hung from the arched roofs of the galleries, wherein sauntered ladies and knights, robed in splendid festive attire.

Within those perfumed retreats the merry strains of the Zambra was heard, young men and beautiful women danced together,

* After nightfall.

and a happy joy seemed to overspread all ; rendering it a seeming impossibility that beyond, in the extended plains behind the rampart walls of Santa Fé, the bivouac fires were extinguished, and that the Christians were in silence watching, were it not for the vigilant call which was heard from the watch-towers on the stone walls of the Alhambra, and on the high hill Del Sol, which mingled its sound with the harmonies of the dance music.

The King Abu-Abd-Allah and the Sultana, surrounded as they were by their ladies and cavaliers, were apparently giving themselves up to the joy of the hour, but which, however, in reality only existed upon their countenances.

Their spirit was overpowered by a lugubrious sadness.

The King saw gathered before him, as though they were friends, the tribes which were enraged by old enmities. The very same bands of Zegries and Abencerrajes which that very morning had met in a field of blood were now dancing together under the dome of the self-same chamber, as though

all ill-will had been forgotten, and the genius of peace had spread its gentle wings over them.

The Sultana gazed upon Aben-Hamet, whose eyes were fixed upon her countenance, rendered more beautiful than ever by the blushes which his burning looks called up, and, remembering her love appointment, she trembled.

“This night in Generalife, close to the cypress of Abul-Walid!” he had said to her.

And the hour had come.

Zoraida loved the King as a spouse, and therefore she could not turn traitor to that love, but at the same time the bravery and generosity of Aben-Hamet inspired in her heart feelings of pity and respect.

He, hapless man! had drank in a poisoned potion of love from the beauty of the Sultana.

His life would not last longer than his hopes, and Zoraida perchance somewhat imprudently dilated them.

And the hour had already come: the looks of Aben-Hamet were demanding the fulfilment of her promise.

And for these reasons were both the spirit

of the King Abu-Abd-Allah and of Zoraida enveloped in a cloud of sadness.

The King, irritated by the treachery of the Zegries, desired to make a terrible example of them: but they were as wily and deep as serpents.

When they saw that their intentions had become frustrated by superior strength, they sent a messenger preceded by a white flag, in sign of peace under the sanctity of Mussulman faith, to protest against their crime, making the whole weight to fall upon their dead leader, Mahomet-Adel-Zegri, and offering new homage to the King, by presenting their sons in pledge of their submission, and beseeching a reconciliation with the offended Abencerrajes.

The King accepted their pledges, and, summoning together the aggrieved ones, exhorted them to pardon and to be peaceful. The Abencerrajes, ever noble and always generous, received with open arms an enemy, who came to them suppliantly and humbly, without suspecting that they carried a dagger concealed behind.

That same night, in Generalife, a Zambra took place, in which the knot of friendship was

to be united, but which on the part of the Zegries was but a veil to conceal their treachery.

For this reason did Generalife on that night manifest her turrets illuminated; and the bandoline, the guzla, and the dulzaina mingled their harmonies with the noise of the cascades and the sighing of the wind among the leaves.

The garden wherein grew the cypress of Abul-Walid was far from the chamber where the Zambra was taking place, and therefore had been forgotten; and its fountain, illumined by the moon's rays, wasted its sweet reflections upon the lofty arches and bowers of laurels.

Everything around breathed silence and mystery; the echo of music and the song reached it in a vague, soft, undecided tone, like a sigh of happiness.

Then the shadows of four men were seen as though emerging from the dark end of the gallery, and engaged in some mysterious conversation. They crossed the open plain, which was lit up by the moon's rays, and were lost sight of in the dark thickets of groves of laurel, myrtle, and rose bushes which surrounded the cypress.

The indistinct murmur of their voices, suppressed by prudence, rose up as though engaged in some heated discussion, when cautious footsteps were heard in the gallery, and a gallant Moor entered the open space, which at that moment was radiantly illuminated by the moon, and stood on the brink of the lake. His splendid eyes were lustrous as he raised them up to the horizon, fixing their gaze upon the moon with an expression of love and hope.

He was the leader of the Abencerrajes, Aben-Hamet.

Some moments elapsed : the youthful lover began to pace impatiently to and fro the length of the garden, attentively listening, his heart meanwhile throbbing, and his eyes fixed upon the gallery.

At length he heard upon the pavement the rustling of trailing silken robes ; then a light form was distinguished in the darkness, and a woman, pale and timid, covered with a veil, advanced and sat upon the raised sod around the cypress, as though she had not noticed the Abencerraje, and then threw back her veil over her shoulder.

This woman was the Sultana.

Her pale countenance, rendered paler by the white moonlight, was clear and pure as a pearl: her hair, of blackest hue, fell in tangled confusion upon her full neck and shoulders; yet she appeared to be dominated by the languishment of love and the terror of a chaste woman. Her bosom, covered with dazzling jewels, heaved under a profound emotion, indicative of the state of her soul as wife, and of a wife in whose veins flows Arab blood, and which labours under the impluses of an affection which had been repressed for a long time.

A love lost in a languid mystery, watched over and protected by the wings of the archangel of purity, tranquil as the waters of a lake, deep like the abyss, and indelible like the mark which the finger of God impresses on the brow of the just.

An unknown love, beautiful like illusions, vaporous like the mist, and pleasant as the fountain of water in the oasis is grateful to the thirsty caravan of the desert.

The Sultana had been dragged by its power even to the very foot of that mournful cypress,

that mute confidant of mysterious loves ; and there, enveloped in silence by the moon's rays and at the mercy of the breeze which agitated the flowers and the leafy groves, and robbed them of their pure, wild perfumes, the veil which covered her soul was rent, and for the first time an intense, absorbing passion revealed itself before her, which anguished her heart and brought the colour to her cheeks.

An abyss had suddenly opened at her feet, and she wished to remain on its brink.

She wished to fly and take refuge in the affection of Abu-Abd-Allah ; but the recollections of the King had become faint in her heart ; she wished to recall the days of his passion, and she only found ice upon the extinguished volcano ; she desired to bring back the memory of his young and beautiful form, dazzling in his greatness and majesty as in the days of their espousals, and in opening her timid eyes she only saw before her Aben-Hamet, trembling, and possessed by a mad, senseless passion.

The spirit of the beautiful one became clouded ; she attempted to fly, but she stumbled

against the Abencerraje who was kneeling at her feet. She tried to turn back, but felt her hands grasped, and burning lips imprinting kisses upon them.

Zoraida fell fainting upon the mound which surrounded the cypress.

At that moment, four men, who were concealed in the thickets, came forth with slow, cautious steps, and disappeared on the opposite side from whence they had come.

Aben-Hamet still remained at the feet of the beautiful tempter, to whom he was speaking in loving accents.

“At last my eyes have gazed upon thee, Sultana, free from the importunate looks of the world. At last I behold thee blushing before me, and the heaving of thy bosom, which rivals the whiteness of the pearl, is more grateful to me than the garden of Hiram, when in dreams it appears to the wandering pilgrim of the desert. Lift up thine eyes, gazelle, and place them upon me, for they are the light of my life, and the splendid star which illumines the dark night of my destiny. Thou dost love me, Houri, because thy hand trembles like mine, and thou dost not draw

it away; and thy rounded form shudders at the contact of my arm. Thou art my spouse, Sultana; the genius of love hath spread over us his wings; the ambrosia from Eden flows from thy mouth and envelopes me in an intense fire. Love me, Sultana, as I love thee; love me, and I will place at thy feet the empires of the East and of the West. When engaged in combats I recall thy loving looks of spouse, my sword will be like a dart, and death, envious of my happiness, will vainly fly near me."

Zoraida was silent. The deep love of the Abencerraje was throwing its powerful dominion over her, and a cloud of forgetfulness was fast enveloping her.

That silence was inspiring Aben-Hamet.

"For thee, royal gazelle, who art imprisoned in the clutches of a cowardly Gyrfalcon, my horse has galloped from the most remote region which the sun loveth, even to the lands upon which it rests in its midday course; and the light does not so love the day, nor the sea the breeze, as I love thee—I who for thee have traversed the East and come here. Oh, how beautiful art thou! A single

glance from thine eyes is worth more than a hundred ages of glory, and the perfume from thy tresses is softer than the fragrance exhaled from the calyx of the tulip of Syria. Come with me, regal beauty! My white mare, when it feels upon its back the precious weight of thy loveliness, will step more proudly than if heaven itself had been entrusted to her. Come, for my brave Aben-cerrajes are waiting for thee; thou wilt see them advancing at full speed, riding their Persian steeds as swiftly as a flight of eagles, to come and kiss the hem of thy tunic and the footprints of thy feet. They will come to thee that thou mayest touch their swords, in order to render them invincible; and then thou wilt behold them fearlessly encounter the people of the East, and return to cast at thy feet the treasures which they will wrench from the vanquished ones! Come, thou joy of my soul; I will give thy beauty a throne more powerful than the one of Abu-Abd-Al-lah!"

When Aben-Hamet pronounced the name of the King, it seemed to break the spell of that dream of love in which Zoraida had suc-

cumbed, and the stern shadow of her duties as wife passed before her gaze.

And she arose, saying, "I have dreamed; I have heard the sweet harmonies of the romances of my youth. Ah! is it thou, Aben-Hamet? What wills thou alone at the feet of the Sultana? The slaves of the King watch, and thy head is not safe upon thy shoulders. Leave me, go! the vassal is not to put himself on an equal footing with his master who can trample upon him."

And Zoraida pronounced these words with such an air and expression of pride and indifference, that Aben-Hamet trembled from shame and wrath, judging that he had been caught in a snare by his enemies.

In his fierce galling sentiments as a despised lover he concluded that the appointment in that retired spot by the Sultana had been a dark ambush and a deed of a shameful, unheard-of treachery.

"Sultana," he replied, "if thou dost not love me, why hast thou brought me here? Why hast thou come alone, and in the silence of the night, into this far distant garden, where everything invites to love? Is not the

name of knight sufficient for thee? I will wrestle until I re-conquer the throne of my grandsires, and thou wilt be Sultana of the Magreb * from the Strait of Geb-al-Tario up to the flowing currents of the Atlantes and the borders of the great desert."

"Begone!" the Sultana exclaimed, wounded in her pride; "begone, vassal. One throne suffices in order to be a Sultana; and to be noble and loyal to my King and spouse I need but the royal blood of Ismail which burns in my veins! Depart, and begone! If the Sultana has brought thee in the silence of the night to the foot of the cypress of Abul-Walid, it was in order to destroy in thy mad love its last hopes; it was to tell thee that thou art treading a slippery path which leads to an abyss."

"The raven croaks, and the hour approaches," sadly exclaimed Aben - Hamet. "Dost thou not hear in the distance lugubrious wailings? They are the wings of the archangel of death, which is directing its flight towards the hapless Aben-Hamet. May Allah watch over thee, Sultana! but if on the mor-

* West of Africa.

row, when the evening star appears in the East, thou shouldst see passing before it a small red cloud, know that it is my spirit, which awaits, full of love, but for one look from thee, thou light of mine eyes ! ”

And the voice of the Abencerraje trembled, and his cheeks became livid as those of a corpse; his eyes, sunk in their orbits, were shining with a brilliant supernatural light.

Zoraida trembled, and a feeling of fear came over her. A dark shadow passed before her spirit, and a veil of tears dimmed her beauteous eyes the woman overcame the Sultana, and the love which destiny was impelling raised its voice in favour of Aben-Hamet.

“Die ? ” she said, in a quavering voice ;
“die ?—and wherefore ? ”

“What is written must be fulfilled,” sadly replied the Abencerraje. “Perchance, can I live in the dark clouds of desperation without thy love ? Oh, I did not seek thee when with my tribe of Africans I came to Granada. I knew not that the Alhambra would prove for me a golden cup containing the poisoned potion of death for my spirit. Yet the wise

ones of my land had told me : 'The Falcon of Africa will fly to the West, seeking purer air and more verdant lands. He will extend his powerful wings, and he will come to a rock where a royal Heron nestles. And the Heron will be the cause of the death of the Falcon, because he will love her, and she will withdraw her eyes from him to place them upon a cowardly Gyrfalcon. And the Gyrfalcon will treacherously spill the blood of the wandering pilgrim bird, and the veil of a shadow will overspread him.' I saw thee, and I loved thee, Sultana; I loved thee as the babe loveth the breast of its mother, as the blind man loveth the light, as the poor love hope, as the sons of Africa love—for once, and once only. Fare-thee-well! what is written is being fulfilled. The Falcon has seen the royal Heron, and the Gyrfalcon is lying in ambush. Perchance, can I live? No, I shall insult the Zegries, and they will kill me. And should I wish to die with glory, are there not on the watch in the Christian camps, thirsting for Moorish blood, the renowned Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, the brave Ponce de Leon, the Conde de Cabra, and the

valiant Don Alonso Fernandez de Cardenas ? Fare-thee-well, Sultana ! the raven croaks, and the hour approaches."

And Aben-Hamet, pale and with a distrustful countenance, frantically sped forward through the garden.

The Sultana, terrified at the excitement of the Abencerraje, could no longer contain her tears. Aben-Hamet, on hearing the murmur of her sobs, turned his face towards the spot where he had left Zoraida, and saw her seated at the foot of the cypress, covering her face with her hands. The fierce African for the first time felt the tears rising to his eyes. He turned back, approached the Sultana, and knelt at her feet.

"Dost thou weep, light of my soul ?" he said to her. "Oh, each one of thy tears is worth more than a torrent of blood. Thou dost love me, and sorrow weighs down thy spirit ! Say but one word, and my sword will be turned into a fiery dart, which will destroy whatsoever opposes itself to our love. In other lands I have Alcazares for thee, under which thou wilt live for me—for me, who will watch on the rampart of its towers in order to

defend thee from the King whom thou dost so fear. Come with me ; I will envelope thy form in Persian shawls ; I will place pearls around thy neck and diamonds in thy tresses. Thou shalt be served by beauteous damsels ; captives from the lands of the Christians and my valiant Abencerrajes will guard thee. Oh, come with me, and I will be thy slave ; and if thou wilt, I will break in twain my sword of knight and set free my brave war-horse ! ”

Zoraida rose slowly ; her burning eyes had dried up every tear ; her look was tranquil, grave, and inspired. Her lovely white hand drew back the tresses of her black hair from her pearly brow.

“ Aben-Hamet,” she said, in slow and solemn tones—“ Aben-Hamet, before I knew thee I lived resigned to my destiny. I loved my spouse, I loved my children ; I slept tranquil, and without anxiety or ambition, protected by the curtain of the royal divan ; the flowers yielded for me fragrance, delight, and freshness ; the day-dawn brought me pleasure in its light, and when the sun in its majesty hid itself away in scarlet rays behind the distant blue mountain, I watched its setting

and felt happy. Oh !” she added, raising her eyes to heaven, “ I was happy, and the spirit of good dreams descended upon me from the seventh heaven, surrounded by Hades and love. But I saw thee, Commander ; I saw thy cheeks dyed by Arab blood and an African sun ; I beheld thee a handsome youth, a valiant jousting, an accomplished knight. I saw thee pass under my miradors, beautiful and gallant, leading thy generous and brave Abencer-rajés ; and since then thou wert ever before me, and I gazed upon thee only as a brother who is loved with the sweet love of purity ! Thy romances, sung with the harmony of thy guitar under my windows, awakened my spirit to the truth, and I shuddered. I desired to see thee nearer in order that thou shouldst discover some defect in me which would disenchant thee. I brought thee here to cure thee of thy love by contempt, and thou hast attempted to conquer me, Aben-Hamet. I love the memory of my mother, whose heavenly face I see in my dreams. I love thee, yet I love my honour far more. Go, depart ! If thou dost love me truly, Aben-Hamet, leave me at once in proof of thy honour as a knight !”

The Sultana said no more ; the Abencerraje gazed sadly upon her for one moment, then silently gathered some white roses, wove them into a chaplet, approached Zoraida, and placed it at her feet.

“Keep this gift, my Sultana,” he said—“keep it ; and if perchance some day thou findest the tomb of Aben-Hamet, place this chaplet upon it, in testimony that thou hast forgiven me.”

At that moment, a face, horribly distorted by fury and rage, peered through the thicket of roses which surrounded the cypress.

It was the King, Abu-Abd-Allah. Behind him, concealed by the bushes, were four men.

The King leaped like a panther from his ambush among the rose-bushes on to the spot which the Sultana had just left. His sword was drawn, and his countenance was fearful to behold.

The four men leaped after him and restrained him. These four men were Mahomet-Zegri, Hamet-Zegri, Mahandon-Gomel, and Mahandin, all four deadly enemies of Aben-Hamet.

“Stay, Sire,” said Hamet-Zegri ; “if thou

wishest to take vengeance, it is expedient that all the Abencerrajes should perish, for they are one and all traitors."

"Yes, by Allah!" cried the King; "go to-morrow with my executioner to the Chamber of Lions." (See Note XIII.)

Saying this, he left them, and vanished in the garden, took a back pathway, and entered anew the retreat of the Zambra. His countenance was placid and serene, and with radiant looks spoke words of love to the ladies as he passed them, and affably smiled upon the Abencerrajes.

Before the feast was ended, Aben-Hamet and his tribe received a command from the King inviting them to a ball on the following day in the Chamber of Lions.

* * * *

Since the night when Zoraida listened to the words of love of Aben-Hamet through the thickets, that ancient tree of Abul-Walid has been known under the appellation of the *Cypress of the Sultana*.



V.

THE CHAMBER OF LIONS.

THE sun had scarcely risen behind the heights of Geb-el-Solair, on the day following the night when Zoraida and Aben-Hamet had probed to its terrible immensity the wild love which burned in their souls, when, under the star-spangled dome of the Chamber of Lions, reclined the King, Abu-Abd-Allah, upon a purple divan at the end of one of its alcoves.

The Chamber was solitary; its entrance door and the opposite alcove to that in which sat the King were covered with red hangings.

The fountain which stood in the centre of the room did not play its limpid cascades; and the sun, which was slowly penetrating through the double transparencies of the cupola, filled

its walls with a weird light, casting the alcoves into the shade.

A deep silence reigned, interrupted solely by the tread of the slaves who guarded the Chamber itself, the gallery of the Hall of Lions, or the hard grating of a lance as it struck the marble pavement.

Abu-Abd-Allah, with a pale, threatening expression of countenance, appeared impatiently measuring time, as though its slowness was torturing his soul.

He was robed in the black garments emblematic of his rank; he wore his unfortunate sword of war; and among the folds of the scarf which wound his head could be seen the kingly crown, each one of its points indicating a city or town which had been conquered and won from the Christians. His eyes, which shone with a mingled expression of most refined cruelty and the deepest hatred, were alternately fixed upon the entrance door of the Chamber and upon the hangings which concealed the alcoves fronting them.

At length some steps were heard in the gallery, the hangings of the splendid entrance arch were raised, and a young man, beautiful

and elegant, entered. He advanced to the alkatifas which were spread at the foot of the King's divan, and prostrated himself before Abu-Abd-Allah.

He was superbly robed ; his calm countenance was shaded by an expression of sadness.

"May Allah guard thee, powerful Lord!" he said. "What may the Royal Lion require of his vassal?"

Abu-Abd-Allah slowly rose from his divan, and cautiously crossed the chamber ; then he gently raised the curtain which concealed the alcove, peered in, and smiled in a cruel manner. He then proceeded to the door of the Chamber, and looked into the gallery. One uniform long line of ferocious African slaves occupied the length of the gallery, and were standing like statues leaning upon their long lances.

He then felt under his robes for his strong coat of mail, returned to his seat upon the divan, and drew himself upon it like a leopard, which draws back the better to be enabled to spring upon its prey.

Aben-Hamet, who was both clear-sighted

and brave, suspected that some danger surrounded him ; yet not a muscle of his face moved, and he remained prostrated before the divan, the King meanwhile fixing upon him a searching look.

But slowly and gradually that look began to lose its dark expression, like the sun dissipates the thick mists of the tempest.

His fair countenance, pale and beautiful, at length regained that peculiar expression of indolence and languid smile habitual to Abu-Abd-Allah ; his eyebrows, which had been previously contracted, returned to their normal state of tranquillity, and his eyes looked upon Aben-Hamet in profound peacefulness.

“ Rise, valiant leader,” said the King. “ A dark deed of treachery assailed thy tribe yesterday, and it is but just that I should offer a pledge of satisfaction to such accomplished knights. Rise, Aben-Hamet, and come, sit near me.”

The Abencerraje obeyed ; he, ever noble and loyal, believed the King’s words to be sincere, and in his soul felt an enthusiastic fire rising within him.

The demeanour of Abu-Abd-Allah was un-

usually affable ; he took up the sword of the Abencerraje and felt its weight and tried its temper ; then, in the most natural manner, he drew the dagger from his waistband and placed it in his own.

Aben-Hamet was completely disarmed.

There was but one thing else left undone.

The King praised his valour, he covered him with flattering words, and at length threw his arms around the shoulders of the Abencerraje. He felt neither coat of mail nor cuirasse ; silk and brocaded robes were the only covering of Aben-Hamet.

The time was passing. The King kept up the conversation by reminding him of the beautiful women who had attended the Zambra of Generalife—the jewels, the devices of the lovers.

He feared to commence the deed of treachery into which he had dragged Aben-Hamet.

At length his cheeks paled, his soul, writhing under the veil of deception, gave to his eyes a look of hatred, and his tongue, unable any longer to control itself, commenced to speak incoherent words in a trembling manner to the Abencerraje.

“Thou art an African,” he said: “thou must often have passed whole nights in the starlight, and consulted thy wise men: thou must have many times listened to the old men of thy tribe as they recounted terrible histories during the long winter nights: yet thine ears will never have heard one so terrible as the tale which thou shalt hear from the lips of thy King.”

Aben-Hamet shuddered under an incomprehensible presentiment.

“It is a history which is sad for one individual, but beautiful for two: it is the tale of a befooled King, of an unfaithful Sultana, and of a vassal—a beautiful history indeed, by Allah!”

Aben-Hamet mastered his feelings, although he began to see the horrible reality.

The King continued:—

“Yes! by the seven sleepers! listen. Within a powerful, strong city lived a King whom every one called weak and cowardly; and every one mocked him . . . behind his back, because he bore the fame of carrying his vengeance even to the bounds of cruelty. And this King, alone, pursued by his destiny,

abandoned by his own vassals, suspicious of his slaves, at last found the royal dwelling sad and solitary. Now, thou must bear in mind that never before had powerful Sultan or respected Emir seen gathered together so much gold, and so many rare marbles, so many treasures, nor so much grandeur as was enclosed in that Alcazar, which had been inherited from his grandsires by that miserable, weak King, as his vassals styled him. And as the King possessed a heart, a wretched heart, puffed with human passions, he one day said, after searching his heart, 'I will seek in my kingdom and in distant lands for a Princess, who will be a beautiful woman, loving, with brilliant eyes, and a pure forehead, yet whose brow will not pale under the brilliancy of the crown, and then I will no longer be alone and forsaken.' He sought and he found. And in truth he found her within his own tribe, in his own family, and almost in his own Alcazar. And she, who was chosen to be Sultana, blushing listened to the venerable Wazir who, in the King's name, besought her for that high destiny, and she accepted the post. All things became

changed : it seemed as though that betrothal of the King with the Princess had been a magic evocation, for ladies and knights awoke from their inanition—the ones put on their veils, whilst the others laid aside their equipments of warfare, and bull-fights and running at tilts took place—games of skill and Zambras . . . verily magnificent feasts ! And everything seemed to smile upon the King. And many moons passed, and the Sultana bore him sons. But a fatal day arrived in which a Wali of a tribe, a young man of royal blood, beautiful and elegant, gifted and brave even as thou art, came from distant lands cavalcading and leading his company of lancers in order to serve that King who was engaged in warfare with a powerful enemy. And the Wali saw the Sultana ; and more than that, he loved her ; and even more than that still, he was loved in return by her—by that vile woman who stained the honour of her spouse.”

The voice of Abu-Abd-Allah became mournful, sinister, and significant.

Aben-Hamet was listening with a pale countenance, full of terror for Zoraida.

The King overcame the tremulousness of his voice and continued :—

“But one night. . . . it was the night of a feast, four loyal vassals of that King discovered in the darkest spot of a garden, in one of his Alcazares, the Sultana in the arms of the Wali.”

“Thou liest!” cried Aben-Hamet, rising energetically. “The Sultana is pure and the infamous calumny of her cowardly accusers cries for vengeance!”

“Oh! didst thou know that Sultana?” said Abu-Abd-Allah, through whose eyes shot a dart of hatred and vengeance. . . . “But stay, listen; the best part of my history still remains to be told. The King also saw what the others had seen, he saw the faces of the guilty ones by the moonlight, and he could have destroyed them there and then, but that small quantity of blood would not have satisfied him; he needed to see it shed in torrents, because that King was cruel, very cruel, in his vengeance.”

And the eyes of Abu-Abd-Allah dilated like those of a wolf which is clutching its prey.

Aben-Hamet saw blood in the look of the

King, and, overcome by his terror, attempted to dash out of the chamber; but on lifting the tapestries he saw behind the door a triple line of Africans and Almoravides.

He turned back again, and, forgetting that the chamber had no other exit, fled to the alhamie, or alcove, concealed by the curtain. But five men issued from it; four of them were the Zegries and Gomeres who had accused him, and the fifth was a ferocious Nubian stripped to the waist, his forehead encircled by a red fillet, and armed with a wide curved cutlass.

Aben-Hamet involuntarily closed his eyes under an impulse of horror. That man who stood before him was the public executioner.

Abu-Abd-Allah grasped the Abencerraje by his garments and dragged him close to himself; his eyes were flashing fire, his cheeks were pale, his lips livid and convulsive, his voice hoarse, and his speech was like the howl of a tiger.

"Thou knowest my history," he said, "but thou dost not yet know their names. Oh! I will tell thee! but, slave, prostrate thyself before thy master!"

And he cast him at his feet.

Aben-Hamet, dominated by his destiny, terrified by that fatality which was placing upon his mad love the hand of death, remained stricken and well-nigh senseless on the floor before Abu-Abd-Allah.

“Oh!” said the King, “by Allah! but vengeance is an inspiring pleasure! By Allah! when one has the power to break in pieces an enemy, one can well scorn the device of ‘unfortunate.’ I am the Sultan of Andalusia! I am the outraged spouse, and thou. . . . thou art the low slave who dares to spit in thy master’s face, and who is going to die with thy accomplice—with the beautiful Zoraida, with the wanton Sultana of my legend!”

“She?” exclaimed Aben-Hamet, suddenly rising with an energy which made the King recoil. “She also? oh no! It is thou, miserable King, who art going to die; yes, thou calumniator of women, thou vile renegade who sellest thy country—thou art going to die. . . . of fear, by Allah!”

And he leaped on the King and endeavoured to recover his sword.

Abu-Abd-Allah gave a cry of surprise when

he felt himself grasped by the Abencerraje ; but at that moment the four witnesses of the scene threw themselves upon him, whilst the executioner, seeing that the moment had arrived for exercising his office, unsheathed his cutlass with horrible celerity.

Aben-Hamet felt the cold steel pierce his breast and he fell on the floor. The executioner advanced, fixed his eyes upon the King, and awaited like a hunting dog the voice of his master.

“ His head ! ” cried the King, livid with rage. Aben-Hamet raised himself on his arm ; he attempted to leap to his feet and assault those who were harassing him, but his strength failed him, his countenance became white, and he fell again on the floor. He made another attempt, and, looking contemptuously upon the King, cried—

“ Assassin ! mayst thou be cursed by Allah ! ”

In another moment his head rolled upon the marble pavement : the executioner had dyed the wide cutlass in the blood of the brave.

What had been written was being fulfilled :

the cowardly Gyrfalcon had destroyed the generous Falcon of Africa.

And then Abu-Abd-Allah became as it were frozen with terror before that livid head, which but a few minutes before had looked so beautiful upon the shoulders of the Abencerraje, and dark doubts troubled his spirit, and remorse commenced to gnaw at his heart.

A dense mist passed before his soul; his limbs became drawn and contracted; the smell of blood irritated him; and he fell into one of his terrible accessions of insanity.

"Let them all perish!" he said, in a low, husky voice; "let them all perish! Perchance, am I not the Sultan of Andalusia? Kill all the traitors—kill every one that passes that door; let their blood flow the length of the channels, and dye red the waters of my pools and lakes!"

The Zegries and the Gomeres were contemplating the King's fit of madness with supreme delight.

"But, Sire," said Mahandon, "if thou dost not conceal the lancers who line the gallery, not a single Abencerraje will enter,

because it is not the custom in Zambras to employ warriors. Therefore command that they be hidden, and allow only thirty of us and the executioner to remain here, which will suffice to make an end of them."

And so it was done.

Then a venerable old man, a Kadi of the Court and of the tribe of Abencerrajes, by name Abu-Al-Hakem, raised the curtain of the chamber, advanced to prostrate himself before the King; but his feeble feet slipped as he walked upon the blood of the Wali Aben-Hamet, and he fell upon the floor.

The Abencerraje rose no more: death had taken him away.

And in a similar manner, one by one, were thirty-six sacrificed to the fury of the King and the treachery of the Zegries; and indeed their whole tribe would have been exterminated in this way, had not the crime itself, which seemingly appeared concealed in that Chamber of Lions, been by its terrible track revealed outside.

The Wali Ebn-Alabez was at that moment entering the Alcazar robed in festive attire. He was approaching, wrapped in thought and

an undefined misgiving, and proceeded to cross the patio of the Arrayanes ; but, on traversing the gallery which leads to the Hall of Lions, his eyes became fixed with horror upon a stream which furrowed the pavement.

A rill of black blood was trickling across it, dyeing the white marble ; and that crimson ribbon of death emanated from the Chamber of Lions.

The Abencerraje shuddered with horror, and irresolutely lingered, listening ; but only some smothered wailing broke the silence.

Suddenly, like to the gazelle which scents the dogs which are following her trail, Ebn-Alabez turned back, and unsheathed his sword. He then dashed through the gallery, notwithstanding the guards which lined the way ; striking and wounding right and left, passing them all in fierce desperation, like the wild boar which finds itself stopped in a pathway, gained access to the door, and in a frenzied manner sped into the Plaza Nueva.

He, however, did not attain to perform this great act of bravery and valour but after a great outcry and noise. The clanking of weapons, the imprecations and oaths,

had reached the King's ears, and penetrated even into the far distant chamber of the Sultana, who, believing that the Alhambra had been besieged by one of those mutinies which were constantly breaking out and dismembering Granada, tremblingly left her apartment, and proceeded to the Hall of Lions, at the same moment as the King and the Zegries reached the Hall of Arrayanes.

Wheresoever Abu-Abd-Allah walked he left behind crimson footprints; there was no Zegri but whose alquicel bore upon it some terrible mark of the assassination.

"My King, what is this?" exclaimed Zoraida. "Art thou wounded? or has the hour of the ending of Granada arrived? Oh, behold! what means this blood which is flowing in the channels?"

And she rushed towards the Chamber of Lions, and on lifting the curtain a cry of horror escaped her lips, a piercing, ringing shriek, produced by the horrifying spectacle which presented itself to her view.

The fountain in the Chamber overflowed with blood; a circle of severed heads surrounded the fountain; and the floor was

strewn with lifeless corpses, the colour of whose torn garments revealed them to have been Abencerrajes.

The head of Aben-Hamet had been hung, from refinement of cruelty, on the golden chain suspended from the dome which sustained the porphyry lamp: the lamp itself had been broken into fragments, and lay about the floor of the pavement.

The eyes of the Sultana were fixed for one moment upon that miserable trophy; her heart seemed as though it would burst within her, and the tears started to her eyes; her lowering, threatening brow became pale, and with a yelling cry she sprang like a lioness upon Abu-Abd-Allah.

"Come, wretch!" she said, grasping him with the strength of despair; "come and gaze upon thy work! come and feast thine eyes! An act worthy indeed of thee and of the Zegries! The wolf is joined to wolves! . . . Well! . . . I had thought I was the spouse of a King and a Knight; but in his place I see only an executioner and a coward!"

Abu-Abd-Allah gazed threateningly upon

the Sultana, his lips compressed in a bitter, convulsive, horrifying smile.

“Aha!” he said, bursting into an hysterical laugh, “this is indeed a grand day. All the traitors at once—and thou also, Sultana! Oh, I am all-powerful! I am the Sultan of Andalusia; thou also Sultana. By the seven heavens of Allah, this sight is not more beautiful than the sod of Generalife! Thou art going to die, Sultana, because thou hast cast a stain of infamy upon the face of thy spouse and master!”

Zoraida cast a look of deep contempt upon the King, and upon the Zegries who crowded behind him: her severe brow was proudly elevated, magnificent in her indignation, as in a calm voice she said to the Zegries—

“Knights! is there one among ye who will dare to say, or even think, that the Sultana of Granada has blemished her name, spotless as the sun?”

For a moment, the Zegries, overcome by the haughty bearing of Zoraida, remained silent: the King looked impatiently upon the four traitors who had been the cause of the assassination of the Abencerrajes.

That look decided them.

"I," said Mahandin, advancing forward, "in the name of these three knights (pointing to Mahandon, Mahomet, and Hamet-Zegri), accuse thee, Sultana, before God and men, of wantonness, treachery, and complicity with Aben-Hamet against the King, thy spouse and our master."

These words were uttered in the midst of a solemn silence in presence of the Zegries, the Gomeres, and the knights and slaves of the King's guards, who had gathered around him when the uproar of the combat caused by the Abencerraje Ebn-Alabez had reached their ears.

The Sultana, taken by surprise by that impudent accusation, became livid with wrath, her limbs trembled, in her veins burned the fiery blood of her race, and in a hoarse, terrible voice cried out—

"Thou liest, villain and wicked Knight, and those who are with thee! And I, Zoraida, niece and spouse of Kings, appeal to the judgment of God by proof of duel, and I call thee infamous calumniators; and for want of a gauntlet, do thou, Mahandin, receive upon

thy face of a coward and of assassin the slipper of the Sultana ! ”

And before she could be restrained, the fair hand of Zoraida dashed one of her tiny morocco slippers across the face of Mahandin.

Such an outrage as this was more than could be borne by people trained to fierce passions, aborigines of Africa, who were ferocious as the lions of their country.

The thirty swords of the Zegries glistened as they, one and all, drew them from their sheaths; but the King interposed, the slaves of the guards advanced, and the genius of death hovered upon the Alcazar, greedy for more victims.

But at that moment a mob of almogawars, preceded by the Emir Muza, entered the Hall of Lions with drawn weapons in their hands, and their foreheads covered with sweat.

“ Sire, fly ! ” cried Muza. “ The people and the tribes who are friendly to the Abencerrajes have forced the doors of the Alhambra, and are rapidly approaching the Alcazar . . . Listen . . . !

An outcry and roar of piercing voices

mingled with musket shots reached the King's ears.

The four accusers turned pale, drew their swords, grasped the King Abu-Abd-Allah, and escaped with him through a postern of the Hall of Justice, at the very moment that the rebels broke down the doors of the Alcazar.

Muza took up the senseless form of the Sultana, who had fainted away, and rushed with her to the door of the Tower of the Almenas.*

The Abencerrajes and friendly tribes, followed by an immense mob, which had become irritated by the assassination of Aben-Hamet and his knights, besieged the Hall and Chamber of Lions.

Not a single Zegri nor a Gomero was spared his life of those that, unable to escape, had remained in the Alcazar.

Their infamous treachery was revenged, even to satiety; and when the rebels could find no more to kill, they destroyed the divans and alkatifas, they broke the lamps and perfume pans, and then forsook the Alcazar. The Abencerrajes took their wives, their

* Now called *de los Picos*.

children, their jewels and ornaments, and left in companies ; some proceeded to the camp of the Catholic Kings, and others, faithful to their creed and rank as Knights, passed over to Africa ; from whence, seven centuries previously, their grandsires had come to conquer the West.

They took with them the remains of the unfortunate Aben-Hamet, whom they buried under the shade of a palm-tree in his own land.

* * * *

Since that terrible day the Chamber of Lions has been called the Chamber of the Abencerrajes, in memory of the assassination ; and even to this very day, the traveller is shown the stains of blood of those valiant knights upon the white marble of its spacious fountain.



VI.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

A moon had passed since the day when the Alcazar of the Alhambra had been stained with the blood of the Abencerrajes.

It was a dark night.

The camp of Santa Fé was slumbering under that dark shadow, confiding in the vigilance of the watch-guards and scouts.

The yeomen, equipped for warfare, were guarding the royal tents, and beyond all was silence and solitude.

Suddenly and unexpectedly stealthy steps and the tramping of horses were heard in a path of the camp, and four shadows leading their horses by the bridle were seen approach-

ing the street in the direction of the gate which fronts Granada.

When they reached the gate, a voice was heard in the silence—

“Who goes there?”

“Tell the ensign of the guards to approach,” replied one of the four shadows.

The hangings over the entrance of a tent which was close by were raised, a gleam of light shot from the interior, and a man advanced.

“Who goes there?” was repeated.

“The Captain of the Donceles,” he answered, approaching the one who had put the question.

“May God guard thee, Captain! what dost thou wish?”

“To go on the plains with these three knights, Don Alonso de Aguilar, Don Manuel Ponce de Leon, and Don Juan Chacon.”

For a moment the man hesitated, like one who has been asked to do a difficult thing.

“Dost thou know,” he at length said, “that I cannot consent to what thou askest?”

“We know it; and for that reason do we ask thee.”

“But their Highness?” . . .

“Their Highness will not know that we have gone out either by this door or by the other, they will only know that we have entered; therefore tell the watch-guard to let us pass.”

“Some evil may befall ye, because the Moors are prowling around the camp.”

“But dost thou know, Ensign, that we have engaged in a contest with the Captains Hernan Perez del Pulgar and Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova as to who will perform a deed of greater valour, and, by God, we shall not lose the honour but with our lives!”

“Knights, ye may go, and may God assist ye,” replied the Ensign. He approached the guard, and ordered him to let them pass; and the four Christian Captains went forth into the field, mounted their steeds, and departed.

The night was nearly passed, a narrow band of white light was bathing the summit of the Vela, and the wind was rising, impregnated with aromatic perfumes. Darkness was fast disappearing, and the light of day was commencing to render visible, like enormous mountains of mist, the hills, at the

base of which stand the Alhambra and the Albaicin.

The four Christian Knights spurred their chargers and took the first road which met their view, like adventurers who engage upon a game of hazard, and to whom all roads are alike.

And proceeding in this wise, they came in view of Granada before day-dawn. They stopped and pondered upon what they should do, because up to that moment they had met nothing in the way of adventure.

But luck, the protector of madmen and adventurers, threw in their way such an adventure, that when it reached its culminating point they judged themselves well satisfied—indeed, as well pleased as those who had obtained what they had thought impossible.

And this was, that whilst they were pondering upon how they should carry out their challenge, they perceived coming towards them, on the road from Granada, by the faint light of the rising day-dawn, a white form, large in size, yet light as a bundle of feathers which is carried by the wind.

To see it, to sit firmly in the stirrups, and run to meet it, was the work of a moment. The white form stopped, and the soft, sweet voice of a woman, who was either in pain or sorrow, was heard issuing from it.

“If ye are knights,” the voice said, “shelter me, for it is due to knights to favour the unprotected, and I am a woman who comes from Granada to enter the Christian camp.”

“Art thou a woman, and alone, at this hour?” said the Señor of Cartagena, Don Juan Chacon. “In some great difficulty must thou indeed find thyself, since thou art thus unprotected.”

“I would gladly wish that the danger and sorrow were mine alone,” replied the lady, “for then thou shouldst not behold me so bereft of protection: but, whereas thou art a knight, as thy gentleness indicates, and thou art also a Christian, as thy speech in broken Arabic reveals, I pray thee conduct me to where I can speak with Don Juan Chacon, the Lord of Cartagena.”

The day was fast breaking, and by its light the Christian Knights saw that she was a Moorish woman, youthful and beautiful. She

was robed in white garments and rode a pony. She appeared pale and trembling from finding herself seemingly surrounded by enemies.

“If thou seekest Juan Chacon, beautiful damsel,” replied the knight whom she had addressed, and who, in fact, was Juan Chacon himself, “thou mayst speak what thou willest, because my friends and I are united in bonds of great friendship.”

“It will be well for us to retire from the road,” she replied, guiding her pony across the level road, and entering a thicket which was close at hand.

The four knights followed her in perfect marvel at the encounter, and when they reached a thickly-entangled spot, where they could be well concealed, the Moorish woman drew from her bosom a letter wrapped in a silken cloth, and said to the knights, “I am called Zaruyemal,* and I am a lady of the household of the powerful Sultana of Granada, whom destiny pursues even to the very point of asking protection from her enemies.”

She paused, and the curiosity of the Christians increased.

* From Zahml—Flower of Beauty.

"It was written," she continued, "that Granada should come to shame and misfortune; and in order that this should be accomplished, the Most High God permitted that some faithless knights, liars, and traitors should enter the city, and envy and treachery should be fostered by them. Thou wilt already have guessed, noble knights, that I refer to the Zegries, that ferocious race of the desert which cannot agree with the generosity and good breeding of the inhabitants of Granada. They are seditious and rebels, and promoters of mutinies and acts of injustice, and they have caused the greatest crime to be committed which has ever been witnessed in past ages, or will ever be seen in the future."

Zaruyemal then recounted the fierce hatred the Zegries bore the Abencerrajes, and their treachery at the jousting—the accusation against the Sultana, and the beheading of the Abencerrajes. Also that the Sultana was a prisoner in the Tower of Comares, in the Alhambra, expecting her deliverance by placing her honour upon the judgment of God by proof of duel, and that the term allowed her

for defence terminated with the very day which was then commencing.

“If thou art a knight,” she continued, “and thou dost see that a lady places her honour in great peril by going into an enemy’s camp, do me the great favour of delivering this letter into the hands of him to whom it is addressed ; and may God judge thee, brave knight, as justly as thou shalt acquit thyself in an undertaking wherein the life and honour of a Sultana are at stake.”

Don Juan Chacon took the letter and severed the silken threads which bore the golden seal, and unfolded the missive.

“What art thou doing, Christian ?” exclaimed the Moorish woman in tones of reproof.

“If this letter is addressed to Don Juan Chacon, lady, permit Don Juan Chacon, who stands before thee, to kiss thy hand in token of the favour and honour which such a lady as the Sultana of Granada deigns to offer him.”

Then he took the beautiful hand of Zaruyemal and kissed it, and proceeded to read the note.

“The Sultana Zoraida salutes thee, Don Juan Chacon, Lord of Cartagena, and prays for prosperity for thee. Thy transcendent bravery shines around thee far and wide, like the rays of the sun which shine upon distant hemispheres. The unprotected know thee, and the unfortunate bless thee, because thou hast ever been a generous protector. Christian Knight, protect me, and may Allah multiply and ennoble thy descendants above the lustre of thy race, and may He close thine eyes in peace after a long life of blessedness, good deeds, and splendour. My honour has been assailed by the vile tongues of four traitors, and I am on the point of having my fair name vindicated by proof of duel, confiding in Allah, in thee, and in my innocence. And thou wilt come, for I await thee. A captive Christian woman who is in my service has told me how great thou art, and how much thou canst perform; how thou art the pride and honour of the army of the powerful King whom thou servest. Oh! they have dashed the blood of my love at my face, and they have broken my heart, because I loved a man, Christian, and he has been assassinated on my account;

but I loved him with a pure, noble love, exempt from all blemish. Christian, come! come with three more of thy friends, who being thy friends must needs be brave. Come, and revenge the blood of Aben-Hamet! Come, and wash my dishonour! The lady who will deliver this letter to thee will conduct thee to the place where thou wilt find weapons and garments, with which to conceal and disguise thy rank and nationality. Come, oh come, Christian Knight, for I confide in thee!"

Don Juan trembled with joy and proceeded to read the letter to the three knights.

"Well, if we are seeking adventures," he said, "what better can we find than this one? Where shall we distinguish ourselves more brilliantly than by defending a Sultana who is in danger from such fierce enemies as the Zegries? Knights! mount your steeds, and let us follow this lady, who will conduct us to the place where we can change our weapons and our accoutrements."

But the prudent Don Alonso de Aguilar shook his head, and remained standing whilst the others mounted their chargers.

"How is this?" he said to the Moorish woman, giving her a deep, penetrating look; "how is this, that Granada, which boasts of possessing so many brave knights, yet has none to come forward and fling the gauntlet down at the accusers of the Sultana?"

"Christian!" proudly replied Zaruyemal, "thou must bear in mind that a lady is the bearer of this message, and that a Moor would give thee no other answer but a blow from his lance, nor would employ any language but the one of the sword. If it pleases thee, come; if thou fearest treachery, remain here; for there will not be wanting knights to undertake gladly what thou despisest."

Don Alonso was silenced. He assisted the Moorish woman to mount her pony, then mounted his own steed; and after a brief conversation concerning the road they were to take, they proceeded to cross the plain which lay before them, leaving Granada on the left, and, guided by Zaruyemal, went towards the green hills covered with olive-trees which surround Geb-el-Solair.

For two hours they journeyed, and after skirting the olive plantations they came to a

small Alcazar, situated close to a small laurel grove in the suburbs of a village which fronts Granada, and which is known as the Azubia. (See Note XIV.)

From this spot a superb view was presented to the sight. Resplendent Alijares with lofty domes; the Alhambra with her red turrets, her Alcazar with slated roof reflecting back the sun's rays, and surrounded by strong boundary walls. On its left were cypresses and the craggy hill of Al-bahul (see Note XV.), covered with fig-trees from Tunis, above which towered the cedars of Palestine, and the palm-trees of Africa. The brow of the hill was dotted with bright white houses, amongst which were seen fresh, verdant, luxuriant gardens. The plain, which lay at the foot of Granada, was furrowed by rivers and canals, and resembled a carpet of many colours bordered with silver, placed at the feet of some beautiful lady. Beyond this were the far distant hills lost in a fantastic cloud of mist, behind which was seen the radiant blue horizon.

This new and marvellous spectacle fascinated the knights, and made them sigh for the day when the standard of their Kings

should wave on the summit of that splendid castle, which, like a vigilant watchman, was guarding this perfect garden of delights.

Zaruyemal dismounted, and knelt down at a postern of the entrenchment behind the Alcazar. The door was then opened.

The Christians dismounted and passed through that door; a Nubian slave took charge of the horses and pony, and followed the knights.

The door was closed upon them.

The four knights found themselves in a garden carpeted with flowers and surrounded by myrtles.

At the further end rose a magnificent arcade sustained by slender Alabaster columns, variegated with blue, red, and gold.

In the high wall behind the arcade was a large door, through which Zaruyemal passed followed by the four knights.

They ascended a flight of stairs, then traversed a gallery and entered a richly-paved chamber, which seemed to have been constructed as a dwelling for the genius of love.

The atmosphere, the tranquillity, the light, the perfumes, the furniture, even the very

shapes of the retreats themselves sustained by groups of columns, their bases worked in fantastic colours, its high dome almost lost in the obscurity, the marble fountain, from which issued clear jets of water, moved gently by the breeze which made the tapestries wave, and became saturated in the perfumes—everything was voluptuous, all things invited to love.

“To whom does this Alcazar belong?” asked the Captain of the Donceles, of Zaruyemal.

“To the Emir of the King, Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan,” replied the beauty; “and the armoury and robes which thou shalt presently see belong also to him.”

And she conducted them across another gallery, then opened an iron door and passed into the Hall of Armoury.

The four knights uttered an exclamation of surprise, for not even in the Alcazar of their Kings had they ever seen so rich an arsenal.

Four slaves fastened on the equipments which they selected; beautiful female slaves adjusted and robed them in richly-brocaded tunics; their tresses were concealed under

white scarves, which they fastened round their heads in the African fashion.

The day was already advanced; the knights were ready armed and well disguised to pass for African Walis. They descended again into the garden, and on passing the entrenchment they found ready for them four horses of the purest Arab breed covered with war trappings. They mounted these, and having had strong lances supplied them, they bade the Moorish damsel farewell, and rode away, making the *detour* of the mountain in order to enter Granada by the road of Guadix.

And it was full time they should do so, for the sun had already reached half its course, and the open palisade in the plaza of Bib-Rambla was occupied by an immense concourse of people. At one end stood the tent of the champions, or challengers, in the accusation against Zoraida: and at the other end was raised a black scaffold, upon which the hapless Sultana was seen surrounded by the ladies of her household.

Four lances had been struck in the ground in front of the tent of the challengers, and from these lances pended four burnished shields.

The shield-bearers were pacing to and fro before them; on the left was the box destined for the judges of the contest—the Emir Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan, the Wisir Ebn-Comija, and the Katif Adel-Kerim.

Further on was a rack of war lances, and some horses covered with armour.

All things revealed the gravity of the deed which was about to take place in that course, which but a short time before had been decked in festive trappings, and now transformed into a stage for proof by duel.

Zoraida, as she sat robed in white on the black divan upon the scaffold appeared tranquil, notwithstanding that under that mournful stage bundles of faggots were laid which were to be enkindled to consume her, should the Zegries by force of arms prove the truth of their accusation.

The crowds, ever disposed for all kinds of spectacles, had from the early dawn filled the galleries, and numbers of ladies and knights, although in mourning garb, were already there, as though they had come to witness a tournament.

The King had carried his cruelty to its

greatest height by appearing robed in gala dress.

And the crowd murmured against the King, yet there was not a single person present who did not deeply sympathise with the Sultana, and curse the Zegries.

At sunrise, a herald of the accusers, preceded by trumpeters and escorted by lancers, cried out the accusation against the Sultana with the call of the trumpet, then threw down the gauntlet on the ground, and challenged those present to deny the accusation.

Behind the box or balcony occupied by the judges and Muza were some knights who became agitated, and attempted to answer the challenge; but the Emir restrained them, and they did not come forward.

No one replied to the accusation, and the time was fast speeding away.

The impatient crowds commenced to murmur.

The sun arose slowly upon the horizon, until it marked the hour of the prayer of Adohar.*

The herald again left the tent of the

* Midday.

Zegries, and, in the same form of words as before, renewed the accusation and the challenge ; yet no one came forward to answer it.

The time was passing ; the sun was fast setting : should no champion appear in defence of the Sultana, she must needs die the death by fire, as an unfaithful spouse and an enemy to the King.

The hitherto calm countenance of Zoraida became pale, more through indignation than terror : she thought her letter had been contemptuously treated by the Christian knights, and her pride as Sultana was roused.

And perchance it was a diverse thought which crossed her mind, and wrenched the tear that fell from her beautiful eyes.

Might it not very probably have occurred that her champions had been met by superior forces on the plains, and death have prevented them from coming to the spot where her honour and oppressed innocence had called them ?

The spirit of the Sultana became saddened : time was flying ; and at length the sun bathed the gable ends on the side of the plaza which fronts the West with a narrow band of red light.

And a little later and even that last ray disappeared, and the sun sank behind the horizon.

It was the hour of the prayer of Almagreb.*

Then again did the herald, preceded by trumpeters, advance to the centre of the enclosure : but at the very moment when the clarions were about to resound, a great outcry and noise was heard coming from the side of the door of Zacatin, and the governor who guarded that door gave notice by sound of trumpet of the arrival of the champions.

The people became excited ; a low, hoarse murmur arose ; the shield-bearers hastened to the tents of the accusers with their horses ; the judges ascended into their box ; the King sat upon his throne ; and the paleness of the Sultana and of her ladies became lessened.

The door of Zacatin was opened, and four horsemen, seemingly from Barbary, judging from their weapons and the breed of the horses they rode, entered the plaza. One of these dismounted, advanced to the scaffold, and knelt before the Sultana.

Then in broken Arabic he said, " Powerful

* The Setting Sun.

lady, I and these three with me are brother knights from Barbary, who have been cast by the sea upon the shores of the Kingdom of Granada. And as we proceeded on our way to see the city which is so celebrated, and which is crowned by such a brilliant name, we became informed by a villager of the deep affliction in which thou art placed, and we have come to offer our lances, and lay at thy feet all we possess in proof of thy innocence."

The knight said no more: the Sultana gazed upon him in silence. But a Christian slave who was near her, and who had not taken off her eyes from the warrior, approached and whispered in her ear—

"My lady, accept his offer, because he who is kneeling at thy feet is no other than Juan Chacon, the Lord of Cartagena, to whom, on my advice, thou didst write the letter."

The Sultana smiled sadly, and cast a grateful look upon the Christian Captain, who still remained kneeling before her, and in a deeply-moved voice she cried—

"God reward thee and thy brother knights for the favour thou dost offer me. I accept thee as my champions. I confide in thee and

in Allah, that my innocence, which has been so treacherously assailed by the Zegries, will be vindicated and once more shine forth."

Don Juan Chacon kissed the hand of the Sultana, descended from the scaffold, mounted his steed, and attentively waited for the third call of the accusation and the challenge.

The trumpets sounded throughout space, and for a third time the herald published the accusation.

"Herald! thou liest like a coward and a villain!" cried Don Juan Chacon, in a voice so clear and ringing that it was echoed by the four angles of the plaza. "Thou liest, and also whosoever sent thee, whosoever maintains the accusation, and whosoever at hearing it remains silent. And in proof and sign of duel to death without pardon or term, thou shalt see what I and my brother knights will do."

The four knights advanced to the door of the tent, where the four shields were suspended on the lances of the challengers, and with their sharp spears they pierced the leathern shields.

A vibrating metallic noise was heard and

the shields fell to the ground. The knight defenders took the field, and retired to take their places on the opposite side of the enclosure, their backs turned to the Sultana.

Hamet-Zegri, Mahandin, Mahandon-Gomel, and Mahomet-Zegri at the same time took the pierced shields from the hands of their shield-bearers, mounted their steeds, and advanced to place themselves face to face with the four disguised Castillians.

Mahomet-Zegri directed himself towards the leader of the Donceles, Don Diego de Cordova; Hamet-Zegri towards Don Manuel Ponce de Leon; Mahandon-Gomel with Don Alonso de Aguilar; and Mahandin with the Lord of Cartagena.

The judges descended into the arena, and demanded an oath from the knights that they should combat like brave and loyal ones, without the aid of witchcrafts or amulets. Then they marked the ground, and Muza, in a loud voice, said, "We grant thee a closed contest and hand-to-hand battle; go and do thy duty."

The Añafles and the drums gave the signal, the King threw his golden staff upon the

arena, and the combatants attacked one another, raising a cloud of dust within the palisade.

The encounter clashed and resounded in a rough, powerful manner throughout the arena; the crowds, anxiously looking on, waited for the cloud of dust to be dispersed.

All the knights were on their saddles; their lances had glanced and slided against their burnished shields.

They took anew the field, they met with equal impetus, the lance of the leader of the Donceles struck and threw off the saddle the fierce Mahomet-Zegri, and the three knights who had not yet been struck down returned to the encounter.

Mahomet meantime had arisen, and, beside himself with rage, advanced furiously to hamstring the horse of Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova. But he was fighting an experienced enemy, and he found him on foot close to him, brandishing aloft his sword, and ere he could protect himself with the shield, the headgear and half the casque of the Zegri had fallen to the ground before a terrible slash from the Christian.

The Moor was faring the worst. Don Diego was pursuing and driving him forward, leveling blows upon his armour of Fez with all the destructive power of the sharp hail of a tempest upon the lofty domes; whilst Mahomet retroceded, leaving behind pieces of his broken armour and shreds of his purple robes. The valiant leader of the Donceles pursued him; he drove him until he placed him between his sword and that part of the entrenchment which formed the side of the support of the scaffold, whereupon sat the Sultana.

The Moor yelled like a tiger which is wounded by a lion: it was frightful to see his countenance, and to behold the furious cuts which his sword inflicted upon the damascened shield which covered the Castillian.

And the combat continued; blood flowed from both knight and champion; Zoraida, pale and terrified, gazed anxiously upon the countenance of Don Diego. That suppliant look of the Sultana gave renewed strength to the brave champion.

Such resistance irritated him, and he threw away from him his shield, and with both

hands raised his sword aloft, brandished it in a circle over his head, exclaiming, "*Saint James and Castille!*" and let it fall upon the head of the Moor with the force of an oak-tree which is hurled down by the hurricane.

In the midst of the uproar of the contest, which, further back on the arena, was being kept up by the other knights on horseback, no one but Mahomet heard the war-cry of the leader of the Donceles.

The Moor fell to the ground as though he had been struck by a flash of lightning, exclaiming, in a terror-stricken voice—

"Treachery! They are Castillians!"

And his tongue became stiffened, his eyes rolled in their sockets, and the paleness of death overspread and changed his countenance.

The generous leader of the Donceles saluted the Sultana, recovered his shield, remounted his steed, and retired on one side to watch the issue of the contest, which continued raging between the other six knights.

Those who were nearest to victory were Don Juan Chacon and Mahandin.

They had both split their lances ; both had cut down the casque of the enemy, and were fighting with bare heads, and their shields, perforated by their strong, sharp weapons, barely sufficed for defence.

The horses crossed and re-crossed each other ; each blow was a wound, each hit a warning of death.

The eyes of the Moor were suffused with blood, like the hyæna which scents a corpse ; the Lord of Cartagena was fascinating him with his burning look.

The time was passing ; the light was fast lessening, and the night was spreading its veil of darkness upon the horizon.

It was necessary to make an ending of the contest ; yet the combat up to that moment was equal on both sides.

Don Juan Chacon clenched his teeth ; his sword broke against his adversary's shield, which fell to the ground, leaving his arm undefended. And, without giving him time to recover his shield, but quick, like a dart of lightning, the Lord of Cartagena took from his saddle an armed club, whirled it over his head, and sent it hissing through the air,

striking the bare head of Mahandin, who fell from his horse, fearfully wounded.

The Moor did not move again. Don Juan Chacon had performed his duty, and retired to take his position by the entrenchment with the leader of the Donceles.

The crowd, overcome by the horror of the scene, was dumbstruck. Nought else broke that funereal silence but the wailing and shrieks of the spouses, the mothers, and sisters of the two dead Zegries.

The judges compelled the women to leave the plaza, in order that their cries should not discourage the knights who were still in close combat; and all that was then heard was the fearful sound of the contest.

Don Manuel Ponce de Leon and Don Alonso de Aguilar were fired with a noble envy when they beheld their friends conquerors, and with renewed zest they proceeded to attack the Moors.

Ponce de Leon and Hamet-Zegri had taken fresh lances, and, as in a tournament, were jousting in and out the lists with great gallantry and warmth.

It seemed that, although some considerable

time had elapsed since they commenced the contest, they had not touched their equipments, notwithstanding that their shields crunched, and the horses fell back, unable to withstand the force of their powerful strokes.

Hamet, enraged at the duration of the combat, and furious at the terrible death of his relation Mahandin, firmly planted his horse to receive Ponce de Leon, who was coming at full speed to encounter him, drew back his body, put out his arm, and threw the lance, which whizzed through the air, hissing like an arrow shot from a crossbow.

It would have fared badly with the Christian to be speared at full speed ; but wrath made the Moor lose his aim and presence of mind, and therefore his lance only glanced against the shield of the Christian, who spurred his horse to attack Hamet-Zegri in his coat of mail.

The Moor comprehended how terrible and inevitable would be that blow, so he reared his horse, raising it on its hind legs, in order to cover himself with the animal.

The lance of Don Manuel pierced the breast of the charger under the trappings of

mail, and the animal fell on its back, catching its rider under its ponderous weight as it rolled over.

The Christian Knight awaited for him to rise; but Hamet-Zegri remained on the ground close to his dead horse. The iron caparison had fallen upon him, crushing his breast, and a stream of blood flowed from his mouth.

Don Manuel Ponce de Leon then proceeded to join his friends.

Then the entire attention became rivetted upon Don Alonso de Aguilar and Mahandon.

The Moor, dismayed at the death of his companions, fought with the strength of desperation. Swift, agile, vigorous, and strong, he gyrated like a whirlwind around the Christian. Don Alonso would turn and meet, and they poured blows upon each other; then would separate, and renew the encounter.

It seemed as though lost hopes were inspiring strength and activity into the Moor.

He broke his sword, and took up his battle-axe; he dashed it at his adversary, but it rebounded against the shield. He then unsheathed his poniard, set spurs to his horse,

and as he passed close to the charger of Don Alonso he let go the reins, opened his arms, and with incredible agility fastened them around his neck, and attempted to throw him off his horse. But Don Alonso sat firmly in his stirrups, threw away his sword and shield, wrenched him from his saddle, and, grasping him with a vigorous arm, steeped his dagger three times in his neck, catching the bend of his armour.

The Moor threw up his arms, and fell at the foot of the horse of Don Alonso.

He rose no more : he was dead.

The crowds, which up to that moment had been silent, uttered a tremendous cry of joy, thus manifesting how odious the Zegries were to them.

The trumpets sounded, and Muza with the judges descended from their box.

The people, in expectation of what Muza should say, became silent ; and, in the midst of a perfect lull, he cried in a loud voice, pointing to the four dead knights—

“ Behold the justice of the Most High, Who is the only Lord and the Merciful ! The Sultana is innocent ! ”

Then came a troop of Nubians armed with lances, and between them a black dressed in red carrying a wide cutlass on his shoulder.

. This man was the public executioner.

The four vanquished knights were beheaded ; and, as became calumniators and assassins, their heads were nailed to the door of the Castle of Bib-Rambla.

Meanwhile the King had quickly descended from the royal box, and was advancing to embrace the Sultana, who, from excess of joy, had swooned away in the arms of her ladies.

But when she felt the approach of the King she recovered from her faint, and turned to him with a look of horror and repulsion.

“Retire, assassin !” she cried. “From this day forth thou in the Alhambra and I in the Albaicin.”

And she rushed towards Muza, who was then coming to declare her free and innocent, and left the plaza in her palanquin, escorted by the judges and her champions.

* * * *

The following day, when the knights, after regaining their horses and equipments which they had exchanged in the *Azubia*, were in

their tents on the camp of Santa Fé, secretly healing their wounds, a shield-bearer of the Emir Muza Ebn-Abil - Gazan delivered to them, in the name of the Sultana Zoraida, as a present, some magnificent jewels, and the horses and equipments which they had used when they fought in defence of her innocence.

Meanwhile, one of the most noble knights of Granada advanced, under the flag of peace, and delivered into the hands of the Catholic Kings a parchment deed, rolled and fastened with silken threads, from which pended the golden seal of the Sultana. In this deed she related to their Catholic Majesties the great exploit which the four knights had performed.



VII.

HERNAN PEREZ DEL PULGAR.

GREAT agitation prevailed in the camp of the Catholic Kings, and from every mouth was heard the astounding relation of the noble deed performed by the Lord of Cartagena, Don Juan Chacon, and three knights, his friends and companions in fame, in which the Christian weapons had, in that renowned combat, achieved a double triumph—that of defending oppressed innocence, and causing four of the most powerful Knights of Granada to fall upon the blood-stained dust of the arena.

They were regarded with profound respect, in which no little envy was mingled, by their own company, and by noble emulation on the part of the rest.

The inquisitive ones would multiply questions; others would exaggerate the deed, notwithstanding its greatness; and it was verily a proud day for the royal Castillian guards.

Yet amongst the crowd which was swaying to and fro, and gathering around the tents of their majesties in order to behold those fortunate knights, as though they had never seen them before, was a man of some forty years of age, of grave demeanour, and of athletic form. His brow was muscular and his look steady, and he walked to and fro wrapped in deep thought before the door of a tent which was not far distant from the one occupied by the Catholic Kings.

His thick eyebrows would become contracted and frowning, as though following the impressions of his musings, and at times a smile of pride would pass across his countenance and as quickly disappear, betraying that some pleasant thought had flashed across his spirit.

And whilst this man walked and pondered, his left hand resting upon the hilt of his sword, the hangings of a neighbouring tent

were raised and a large man—nay, almost a giant—issued from it.

He was elegant, and covered with jewels, and fancifully dressed as though he were a young man, though he appeared, judging from his countenance, to be past forty years of age. He advanced towards the other, who, on hearing footsteps near him, raised his head and recognised him, and went quickly to meet him.

“God guard our good Hernan Perez del Pulgar!” said the one who had issued from the tent, as he grasped the hand of the one who was walking.

“Good luck to the Señor Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova!” replied the other.

The two captains looked at each other after this salutation like men who are occupied by the same thoughts, and remained silent for some time.

“We live in days of fame,” said Pulgar to Gonzalo. “The Castillian name will stand a marked one in Bib-Rambla by the Lord of Cartagena, yet there still remains room for our names also.”

“Don Juan Chacon was always valiant and

fearless," replied he of Cordova ; "and the Ponces of Leon, the Aguilares, and the Cordovas maintain the fame of their lineages, since they are the bravest amongst the best lances of Castille. And by God, Hernan, but we shall need great good luck in order to win our challenge, if we are to leave a mark of our exploits upon an equal height with theirs."

"But I vow to God and upon my soul," exclaimed Hernan Perez in a fiery manner, "that I shall either erase from my coat-of-arms the device of my lineage, or the act which I shall perform will be such that it will leave its impress of astonishment upon present and future generations."

"*El Pulgar, quebrar, y no doblar,*"* smilingly observed Gonzalo Fernandez. "Oh ! I rejoice to see thee determined upon an undertaking. To thee appertains the next exploit, and then to me. Let us do our utmost, Hernan, and then God will assist us."

At that moment a gallant little page advanced to these two knights as they were conversing, and delivered a frame, or board,

* The ancient motto of the Pulgares.

enveloped in a cloth, to Pulgar, from the King's artist.

The page retired.

Hernan Perez del Pulgar removed the wrapping, and presented to the eyes of Gonzalo de Cordova a folded parchment, upon which, on blue ground, was written in golden letters the words *Ave Maria*.

The valiant captain looked, with an expression of mystery upon his countenance, at Gonzalo de Cordova, and said to him, his eyes meanwhile sparkling with enthusiasm, "I shall place this escutcheon where no one has yet even dreamed of. . . . Oh yes! I shall add another golden quarter to the blazon of the Pulgares, or, Fernando, I shall die in the attempt. But, meantime, do me the favour of keeping this affair a profound secret."

"Thou wilt ever be 'he of the exploits' (*el de las hazañas*), Hernan," gallantly replied he of Cordova, stretching out his hand to Pulgar.

"And thou wilt be known in future ages by the appellation of 'the Great Captain,'" replied Hernan.

Then they entered the tent; and, as the shades of night were fast falling, they lighted a torch, and Pulgar sent for fifteen of his shield-bearers.

And these came and sat down, respectfully uncovering their heads in presence of their captain.

And the names of these brave men history has jealously preserved written upon its pages.

They were—Geronimò de Aguilera, Francisco de Bedmàr, Diego de Jaen, Alvaro de Peñalver, Diego Gimenez, Pedro de Pulgar,* Adalides, Montesino de Avila, Ramiro de Guzman, Cristobal de Castro, Tristan de Montemayor, Diego de Baena, Alfonso de Almeria, Luis de Quero, and Rodrigo Velasquez.

When the men were all seated, Pulgar addressed them in a solemn voice.

“I am well aware, Hidalgos, of your loyalty and your bravery, of which you have given me ample proofs; and I, on my part, confide to you a great project, which, if carried to the end, will place our names upon the temple of fame.”

* A Moor taken captive by Pulgar, and who, on being baptised, took the name of his master.

The shield-bearers looked at their captain, manifesting upon their countenances the impatience they felt to become acquainted with the deed which they were called upon to perform, and the brave leader del Salar continued :—

“Yesterday four knights of the King’s guards, whom ye all know, performed a great exploit, as great as that of vanquishing Moors within their own walls, in presence of the people and the King of Granada ; and I, if never the last in danger, though not the foremost in glory, also desire to enter that city which is so strongly and persistently defended.”

The Hidalgos uttered an involuntary cry, and doubted whether they had rightly comprehended what their captain had proposed ; but Pulgar continued speaking in the same calm manner, as though he had not noticed their gesture.

“I intend, with God’s help, to enter Granada at day-dawn ; but as it would wound my very soul were any of the infidels to interpose themselves in my path and defeat my intention, I would wish you to come with me, not

as a recompense for the esteem in which you are held by me, nor as a command, but holding it as a great favour should you accede to my request."

Francisco de Bedmàr arose, and the other fourteen with him.

"Wheresoever thou mayest go, captain, we also shall follow; and if any fear have we, it is no other than the fear of losing such a noble and valiant leader."

Pulgar gazed upon him from head to foot.

"Thou, Bedmàr," he said, "didst scale the walls of Alhama, and I have also seen thee take free port in the Castle of Salar, and fight in Velez, and in Baeza, upon the very plains. And now that thou art at my side, why dost thou place so little confidence in God, and dost already reckon me with the dead?"*

"We should ill comply with our duty, and what we owe to thee, Hernan," observed another of the Hidalgos, "were we not to counsel thee when thou art attempting to run to certain perdition."

"It is not advice I ask of thee," said Hernan Perez, in a solemn tone; "what I ask

* Chronicles of Hernan Perez del Pulgar.

is simply that thou accompany me as far only as the doors of Granada."

The Hidalgos were silent.

"The night has already set in," said Pulgar; "go and equip yourselves—God will deliver us; and if we are penned in, what does it matter? We have already learned in the Zenete the way to clear a path for ourselves."

After saying this he shook hands with Bedmâr and the rest of the shield-bearers, and politely bade them farewell at the door of the tent. He informed them where on the plains they were to rejoin him, and then retired to the further end of his tent, where one of his servitors equipped him.

He took the placard with the *Ave Maria*, and a wax taper, then mounted his horse, left the camp, and proceeded to the place of rendezvous.

The night was obscured by dense mists, and Pulgar, taking advantage of the darkness, remained on the borders of the road, awaiting impatiently the Hidalgos, who came cautiously one by one, and quickly gathered around him.

"Now, cavaliers," the captain said, when

they gathered around him, calling each by name, "what is now requisite is diligence and silence. We have to cross the plains and reach the river; we have a long journey before us, and not much time remains before the day dawns."

His valiant and accomplished company ranged themselves behind Pulgar, and started on the march.

Nothing was heard but the tramping of the horses and the crunching of their bits, and in silence and single file they reached almost to the enemy's ramparts, at the point where the Darro joins the Genil.

"Now, my friends," said Pulgar, "go and collect from those thickets some branches; and mind they be dry, that so they may take fire quickly."

"Dost thou mean to set fire to Granada?" asked Aguilera.

"Yes," replied Pulgar; "and I confide in God that we shall return back to our camp illumined by the light from the flames which shall devour its rich bazaars and celebrated Alcazares."

The Hidalgos listened in mute astonish-

ment ; but, knowing the tenacity of purpose which characterised Pulgar, they silently obeyed, loaded their horses with branches, and followed him across the water, breasting the current of the river Darro.

Favoured by the roar of the current, and the deep obscurity of the night, they passed the Castle of Bib-Ataubin without having been either heard or perceived by the Moorish watch-guards, and succeeded in reaching the last bridge, where they clustered around Pulgar, the water reaching up to the girth of their horses.

“ Wait for me here,” said Pulgar ; “ and thou, Pedro, who knowest better than we do the city in which thou wert born, load thy horse with these branches, and follow me.”

On hearing these words the Hidalgos became excited, and a great altercation followed, because each one insisted upon following their captain ; and, indeed, to such a height did the dispute rise, that Pulgar was compelled to consent that some of them should accompany him.

After another hot dispute as to which should be the chosen ones, the leader del Salar,

guided by Pedro, and accompanied by Bed-mâr and four others, went into the channel of the river, the water reaching up to their knees, and entered the city, following in the dark the length of the strand of the *Curtidores* until they reached a magnificent building. (See Note XV.) .

One by one they scaled the low wall which bounded the river, followed a very narrow lane, barely sufficient as a channel for a drain (see Note XVI.), and entered a small plaza, where two exceedingly high buildings fronted each other.

The one was the Arab University,* the Emporium of Science, the Sanctuary of Learning, which had produced the Sages of Seville and Cordova, and all those who, driven by Castillian arms, had taken refuge in that last spot in the West, wherein the teaching of Ismail flourished; the other building was the Mosque of Granada,† with its gold filagree doors, its rich arched windows of marble, and its worked gable ends; although at that moment none of these magnificent

* Now the Chapter-house.

† Now the Temple del Sagrario.

portions could be descried in the darkness of the night.

"Have we already come to the Mosque?" asked the leader del Salar of his captive Pedro del Pulgar.

"Yes, captain," he replied. "Listen to the wind as it moans through the highest minarets of the Mosque. This wall which shelters us is that of the University, and the pile which rises in its shade is the house of the great Faki."

The impatience of Pulgar increased; he asked Pedro for the materials for striking fire, and lit the taper he had brought with him. He then approached the door of the Mosque and knelt down; his shield-bearer did the same; he took from his breast the tablet of the *Ave Maria*, and fastened it by the silken threads which hung from it to the pommel of his poniard, then with a powerful blow struck the dagger into the network of the door.

"Be thou witnesses that I take possession of this Mosque," he said to the five shield-bearers, who were thunderstruck by the exploit of Pulgar, "in the name of the Kings

of Castille, consecrating it from this moment to the Queen of Heaven, whose name I leave in the power of the infidels until such time, whenever that may be, when it shall be ransomed." *

And he rose from his knees, and his men with him. Pulgar then demanded of Pedro, "Where is the Al-Kaisseria?"

Pedro pointed to a narrow lane, which communicated with the Zacatin, and said, "Along that road."

"Light the way and guide us, for, by the name of Pulgar which I bear, I will set fire to Granada this very night."

But on turning round the corner of the Zacatin they heard the tramping of many feet, and saw advancing towards them the Moors, who with lighted torches were picketing around and guarding that valuable spot.

To see them, and run to meet them, sword in hand, was the work of a moment. The Moors yelled, and that part of the city became completely roused up; and then Pulgar, fearing that they would rise up in arms, cried out to his men, "Return by the same

* Chronicles of Hernan Perez del Pulgar.

road! Follow me with fearless hearts and ready swords!"

And he dashed through the midst of that troop of Moors, leaped the low wall by the strand of the *Curtidores*, then descended to the bridge, where the rest of his company were waiting for him in fearful anxiety on account of the uproar which had reached them from the city, remounted their steeds, and started at full gallop, taking the road which led to the camp, which they reached before day-dawn, and ere their absence had been perceived.

* * * *

Their Catholic Majesties conferred upon Hernan Perez del Pulgar the right of quartering his coat-of-arms with the *Ave Maria*, and also granted him the privilege of being buried in the very spot where he had so bravely brought his great exploit to a brilliant termination. (See Note XVII.)

The fifteen *Hidalgos* who had accompanied him in his arduous undertaking, received, after the conquest of Granada, gifts of land in recompense for their meritorious services. (See Note XVIII.)



VIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE AVE MARIA.

THE sun had scarcely dissipated the mist of the previous night, and its rays, still weak, were barely lighting up Santa Fé, when a confused noise of hasty steps, clanking of weapons, and voices of people, who in all haste were ascending the stairs which led to the ramparts, was heard on the side which fronts Granada.

Their Catholic Majesties, the Prince Don Juan, his sisters the Infantas Doña Juana and Doña Isabel of Portugal, Fray Hernando de Talavera, Pulgar, Cordova, Tendilla, Aguilar, and a number of noble knights, surrounded by lancers, were looking with frowning countenances towards the field where a Moor, accompanied by ten Almoravid trum-

peters and horsemen, and riding a powerful black horse caparisoned with a coat of mail, was standing before them.

His lance bore upon its pointed blade the tablet of the *Ave Maria*, which Pulgar had so bravely affixed the previous night upon the flagree door of the Mosque.

He was the Arrayaz Abd-Allah-Ebn-Tarfe, one of the most experienced and fiercest of the leaders of Granada, who, yelling with wrath, had wrenched that tablet from the door of the Mosque, and, without losing more time than sufficed to equip himself and mount his charger, had dashed off in pursuit of Pulgar and his fifteen shield-bearers.

The eyes of the valiant Moor were flashing fire, his red over-garment seemed to be demanding blood, and his pale cheeks bore evident proofs of the fierce anger which agitated his spirit.

The harsh sound of the trumpet had summoned to the ramparts the Princes and the Christian warriors, who marvelled that an infidel should dare to present himself within a throw of the lance from their tents.

And Tarfe was looking at them like a wild

bull which has been goaded by the multitudes, and his wrath became each moment more convulsive, as he flaunted the tablet of the *Ave Maria*, brandishing his double-bladed lance from which it hung until it crunched in the air.

But when he saw the ramparts covered by the Christian warriors, he passed a dark, critical look at each one, as he recognised the captains, whose faces he had seen in the dust of the battle-field, and when he judged he had found worthy competitors, he made a sign to the trumpeter.

Three times did the sound of the trumpet break the silence, and was echoed in the neighbouring Geb-el-Beira, and repeated in the distance by the mountains.

That signal for attention was responded to in a similar manner by the trumpeters of the royal guards.

Their Catholic Majesties, the Princes, the Commanders, and the soldiers, Castille itself in fact, and Aragon, all stood listening.

Tarfe rose upon his stirrups, he looked wildly upon the ramparts, and his powerful voice was heard throughout space.

“Treacherous dogs!” he cried. “Ye, who enter into our city like the owl under the cover of the night darkness, to leave in it the name of thine idols: I am Tarfe! I have wrenched from the doors of the Mosque the name of Maria, and now will drag it before thee in the dust of thy tents! Come forth, thieving dogs! Come forth one by one, two and two, hundreds by hundreds! Come forth—Tarfe awaits ye! My lance doth well know ye, villains! and my sword yet bears on its edge the marks of your blood.”

The Moor said no more. He listened for a reply; but not a voice was raised, not a movement visible among the Christians, who seemed, one and all, to have been turned into statues.

Tarfe became irritated. He spurred his charger, and advanced to half the distance between him and the wall, and then with redoubled fury cried out—

“If the affronts which ye have heard are not sufficient to bring ye out on the field, look, Castillians, and see where I shall place the name of Maria; and if any soldier or knight, Infante or King, takes umbrage, let

him meet me on the plains, where I shall await for him until the hour when the sun sets behind the mountains of Loja."

Having said this, he took the tablet of the *Ave Maria*, and fastened it to the ribbon which tied up the tail of his horse, then turned round and slowly left the camp, followed by his own men.

He proceeded to the thicket where Zaruyemal had delivered to Don Juan Chacon the letter of the Sultana, dismounted, dismissed the Almoravides and trumpeter, and threw himself on the sod in the shade, laid his lance by his side, along with the sword-belt and his shield.

Meanwhile, in silence, the forms of Kings and Infantes, of ladies and knights, disappeared behind the towers of Santa Fé.

Not a single word was heard among that troop of brave ones: the challenge had been put forward with over-much insolence for them to converse, or indeed to be divided in opinion upon it: the countenances of all were full of furious indignation: every heart was on fire; and each one of those swords rested impatiently in its sheath.

But what was wanting in speech was excelled by activity; from the turrets they proceeded to the tents, and the garments of peace which they wore were quickly becoming exchanged for equipments and harness of war.

Among those experienced warriors who were hardened by the fatigues of war, a youth, beautiful as a woman, his look stern and fiery like that of a lion, was seen crossing at a rapid pace the whole length of the camp, and entered a solitary tent.

“Quick, Nuño!” he said to an aged soldier who was waiting impatiently at the door, “give me my equipments—my lance and my horse; quick, because the captains of the camp are arming themselves, and it will not be long ere a hundred good swords will be drawn, and permission asked to be the one to rescue the holy *Ave Maria* from the hands of that infidel dog.”

And truly such was the case. Scarcely had Don Fernando and Doña Isabel entered their tents, visibly affected by the challenge of the Moor, than a crowd of captains, knights, ensigns, and corporals of the King's Guards rushed in to demand, in one voice, permission

to measure their lances with that of the Moor.

Each one alleged his right with many fair reasons, and as they were all peers in bravery and merits, their Catholic Majesties assembled them, and held a council in order to elect a champion to terminate this important undertaking.

Whilst all this was taking place the handsome youth had encased himself in a coat of mail of the finest temper, taken up a shield of Fez, which had been won by his ancestors from the Moors on that very Vega of Granada. Then he mounted a fiery Cordovan colt, armed himself with an ash-tree lance of ponderous weight and great length, and dashed at full speed through the nearest gate, surprising the guards ; started the round of the camp, and sped across the plain with the fleetness of a war-horse.

Quickly, very quickly indeed, did he disappear in a cloud of dust, notwithstanding the cries of the guards, and reached the thicket where Tarfe was awaiting.

The young man drew down his vizor, drove his horse through the dense foliage, and came

upon the opening in the wood, where, with all the unconcern of the brave, Tarfe was slumbering, lying on the soft sod at the foot of his horse.

The heart of the youth beat with redoubled impatience, and he cast a look of wrath upon the Moor.

"Rise!" he cried, drawing the mailed head of the horse close to him; "rise, boaster, rise!"

Tarfe awoke on hearing the ringing words of the Castilian. He slowly arose, stood upright, and gave his adversary a lengthened and penetrating look.

"Who art thou?" he asked, contemptuously, "knight without device or badge. Perchance, are there no valiant captains in thy camps to come and measure swords with me, the leader of a hundred combats?"

"I, as an inexperienced knight," replied the young man, "have come for thy head to take it as my badge; and I, as a Christian, have come to pluck out thy heart and take the device and tablet which thou hast dared to fasten to the tail of thy horse, and upon which is written the name of her whose throne is above the angels."

“Go, Christian,” said Tarfe, disdainfully. “I shall not measure my weapons with one who comes with maiden sword and hides his countenance.”

The youth raised his vizor angrily, and showed the Moor his young and beautiful face.

Tarfe looked with amazement upon the young man, and the expression of contempt disappeared from his countenance, whilst a smile played around his lips.

“Young man, thou art brave,” he said, “and great fame wilt thou acquire in the world, unless some traitorous lance cuts short the span of thy youthful life. But go; I am not an assassin, nor do I fight with children. Go and tell that terrible Gonzalo de Cordova that Tarfe awaits him, sleeping.”

And he was proceeding to recline once more upon the turf, when the youth drew down his vizor, raised the butt end of his lance, and struck it wrathfully across the Moor’s shoulders.

Tarfe leapt up like a wounded panther, buckled on his shield, examined his sword, mounted his horse, and took the field, with

his lance lowered against the Christian, crying out, in a voice hoarse with fury—

“By Eblis,* thou villain, thou shalt pay with thy blood for this mean and cowardly outrage!”

And he proceeded to attack the youth, who was also coming towards him.

The air rang with the noise of the encounter.

The lance of Tarfe was split into a thousand splinters against the Castillian's shield, yet the youth did not move from his saddle, whilst his spear had entered the joining of the cuirasse and coat of mail of the Moor, and slightly wounded him, although it fell broken to pieces as though it had been a cane.

Tarfe roared out with wrath, and his wide curved scimitar of Barbary flashed like a ray as he drew it from its sheath.

The Christian drew his sword, took the field anew, and once more they attacked each other with redoubled fury and activity.

The blades fell upon the hard steel of their armour; the tufts of plumes, their ornaments, the over-garments were the spoils of the encounter, and they were commencing to

* The Arabic name for Satan.

wrench corselets and greaves, whilst blood flowed from more than one wound.

Tarfe was roaring like a famished lion of the desert. The shame and mortification of not having at the first encounter vanquished that youthful Christian soldier was reddening his cheeks; and the indignation he felt that a lad should have dared to insult him made him redouble his attacks, and rain blows upon him with all the swiftness of a falcon, ferocious and irritated.

Yet he always met the ready shield of the Christian, and his horse ever caracoled around the Moor, engaging him in a weary defence, although he redoubled his blows upon the tempered steel of his mail.

Both horses were panting.

The Christian Knight, to whom time was of undoubted importance, would make his horse gyrate around the Moor like a whirlwind.

At length both chargers, tired and jaded, their flanks streaming with blood, commenced to obey but badly the bridle, and the one which carried Tarfe stumbled against the trunk of a tree and fell as he turned round, dragging down its rider.

The Castillian drew his steed back, in order not to trample upon the Moor; then he leaped to the ground, and advanced towards him sword in hand, and buckled shield.

The Moor had risen from the ground covered with dust, and trembling with rage.

The combat was renewed on foot.

Steel dashed against steel: the God of battles, seated upon a red cloud, was watching the two knights in amazement.

Tarfe clenched his fists and his teeth; his cutlass was swayed in a circle above his head, and fell like a ray of lightning upon the Christian Knight.

The damasceen blade flew broken to pieces against the shield of the youth.

Tarfe was disarmed: no other weapon remained to him but the poniard, a weak, useless weapon. He threw from him the shield, and rushed with open arms towards the Castillian, who was also coming to meet him in the same manner.

The combat was becoming a wrestling match.

A bitter, sardonic laugh burst from Tarfe. Muscular, of gigantic stature and strength,

and a great and experienced wrestler, he thought to crunch to pieces the youthful champion between his powerful arms.

And so most undoubtedly it would have happened; but when the Moor was holding him in his arms, when the corselet crunched in that iron embrace, his hand sought the joins of the coat of mail of his enemy, and his poniard was thrust through, piercing his breast.

Tarfe threw open his arms, uttered a fearful cry, and fell back dead on the ground.

The *Ave Maria* had been rescued.

The vizor of the young man was drawn up, his beautiful youthful face, covered with blood and sweat, was raised to heaven, and his black, eloquent eyes were suffused with tears of gratitude.

A soft, sweet prayer, lost like a perfume in the abyss of immensity, yet which ascended even to the very throne of God.

Then he approached the horse of the Moor, unfastened from the tail the tablet of the *Ave Maria*, fell on his knees and kissed it, then hung it round his neck in the manner of a vassal who manifests the blazon of his master.

Then he advanced to Tarfe, removed his vizor, and when he beheld his cold face, rendered ghastly by the pallor of death, he, with a pride which at his age was pardonable, said—

“Haughty Moor! the inexperienced knight has already a badge for his arms, and the *Ave Maria* will be a quartering of glory in the escutcheon of the Garci Lasos de Castille!”

He proceeded to cut off the head of the Moor, hung it to the saddle, mounted his charger, quitted the thicket, and took the road which conducted to the camp.

Far in the distance a cloud of dust was being raised under the feet of a small company of horsemen which was rapidly advancing, until it revealed who they were.

This troop of horsemen consisted of Captain Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, who had been elected by the Council of War to answer the challenge of Tarfe, and who appeared armed with every weapon, and covered with galas and feathers. The rest were his shield-bearers escorting him.

They quickly came up to the youth. They

beheld upon his breast the tablet of *Ave Maria*, and pending from his saddle the head of the Moor.

The Captain stood still and his men with him.

“Pardiez, Garci Laso,” he said to the young man, “thou hast commenced early to be valiant! Thou art lessening the roads for great exploits! Chacon and Don Diego de Cordova, Leon and Aguilar, enter the enclosure in Bib-Rambla, and conquer. Pulgar places the name of *Ave Maria* in proof of possession upon the Mosque of Granada, and thou, yet a mere child, dost rescue it from so formidable a warrior as Abd-Allah Ebn-Tarfe. What, then, dost thou leave Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova to perform?”

This he said smiling affably like one who has ample glory of his own to be able to envy that of another—he, the man who could stand foremost, and was the most brilliant glory among Spanish warriors.

The Captain and the youth shook hands, turned their horses, and returned together to Santa Fé.

* • * * *

Since that day the Lasos are Lasos de la Vega, and upon their armorial bearings stands conspicuously *Ave Maria*; from that day also the arms of the City of Santa Fé are, a spear piercing the head of a Moor, and from the blade pends a tablet with *Ave Maria* written upon it.





IX.

GONZALO FERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA.

(La Buñolera.)

THERE WAS much distress and want in those days in Granada: the Christians had destroyed the corn crops in the summer, and the grass and millet had been burnt up also.

There was no village upon the Vega which did not manifest the devastating tread of the Castillian, nor a spot of land which had not been watered with blood, nor tree which had not been a silent witness of some terrible deed of arms.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring territories, fearing the conquerors, had rushed to take shelter behind the walls and castles of the city; and that class useless for warfare served but to diminish the supplies which

were no longer brought in, not even on the side of the Sierra, towards the Alpujarras.

These people, harassed by hunger, were constantly in agitation, and every day some quarrel took place at the doors of the bakeries, which would end in mutiny, and at times even in open rebellion, making the blood flow in the streets, and the already vacillating throne of the King Abu-Abd-Allah tremble upon its weakened foundations.

In vain did Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan in the Vega and the prudent Wisir Ebn-Comija in the councils attempt to remedy the evil: Muza was beaten back at each sortie; the price of bread was rising; the granaries were fast becoming empty; and the Jewish merchants accused of being usurers were brought out of their houses and dragged through the streets by the famished crowds.

The civil bands, leagued together under the shadow of public misery, were openly conspiring, and in broad daylight they attempted to deliver up the city into the hands of the Christians; and the spies would every day take some good news to the Catholic Kings.

Granada of the Arabs and Moors was fast

approaching the West of her reign, the setting of the brilliant sun of her glory, and, broken up, famished, and seduced more by her sons than by the Christians, was, like a noble matron, vainly attempting to hide her shame and cover her disgrace under the last torn shreds of her purple robes of Sultana.

Muza tried a last effort. One day in the early dawn he left Granada with ten thousand horsemen, and a countless number of foot soldiers and people, in order to besiege the Christians in their camp.

This he did more with the object of causing noise, confusion, and uproar, than to effect the great project which occupied the thoughts of the brave Emir.

A fatal day it proved, however, for the armies of Ismail, for the soldiers became disbanded at the very first encounter with the Christians, and the horsemen, finding themselves entrapped, turned and fled, the efforts of Muza, Reduan Vanegas, of Abdel-Kerim, and other good commanders, being unavailing to restrain them, and keep them in order, the greater number of them never again dyed their lances in Castillian blood.

The standard of Islam was trampled upon by the chargers of the conqueror, and the Mussulman troops, driven by force of arms back within their ramparts, lost their artillery, their standards, and their watch-towers; whilst the swords of Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, of Hernan Perez del Pulgar, of Garci Laso de la Vega, of the Counts de Cabra and Tendilla, and of other illustrious Captains, were steeped in Moorish blood up to the very hilt, to the shame of Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan, who, furious like a goaded bull, swore by Allah and by his title of Knight not to return to the field with his men.

What was written was being fulfilled: the Emir had been routed, and if the flags of Ismail still waved from the towers of the Alcazaba, it was at the mercy of the winds of degradation and disgrace.

This unfortunate routing spread terror throughout Granada, and its distress was redoubled. The Christians surrounded the city, and every door was closed through fear, and the immense multitude which its walls enclosed began to experience the fearful pangs of hunger, which, owing to the fertility of the

soil, they had been hitherto unaccustomed to.

In every part a riot was brooding ; the insults to the King were already openly manifested ; and Zoraida, shut up in her Alcazar of the Albaicin, continued lamenting and weeping over the hapless end of Aben-Hamet, and was longing for the day when, expelled by the Christians from Granada, she should be at liberty to cross over to Africa, and water with burning tears of remorse the tomb of the unfortunate Aben-Hamet.

And with this thought ever fixed in her mind, she distributed her gold among the people, and her partisans incited the multitudes to rebellion, and the cancer of death was spreading itself more and more upon the heart of Granada, torn by her sons.

In view of this immense, terrible, crying wrestling, it was not difficult to predict the day when the conqueror would find the Koran flung upon the rich pavement of the Royal Mosque of the Alhambra.

In these days there was in the street of Elvira, in Granada, near the Plaza Nueva, a cake or fritter shop, situated opposite an an-

cient fountain in an angle of a small market-place. This shop, on account of its situation, had been turned into a public bakery, surrounded by a palisade, and was guarded by Almoravides, in order to restrain the crowds which daily flocked to obtain bread.

Behind the palisade or entrenchment a Moorish woman served the bread, along with some powerful men who were the bakers. This woman was a handsome brunette with large eyes, black as her profuse and shining hair, and a ruby mouth, around which played a smile of disdain.

It was said that many of those who hovered around and frequented the bakery came there more with the object of gazing upon the rounded form, the lofty brow, and elegant waist of the damsel, than in order to purchase fritters or bread; and often in the dead of the night would some romance sung under her windows be interrupted harshly by the sound of sword-blades clanking, which would be followed by cries of pain or death.

The Moorish woman was, however, deaf to the pleadings of all her lovers, and at times her eyes bore evident proofs of weeping; then

the daily customers would remember that some two years before this she left Granada with the *taifao*,* that was vanquished by Hernan del Pulgar, and it was no longer a subject of wonder that Haxima (for such was the Moorish woman's name) should turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of her new lovers, since she was faithful to the memory of Aben-Hamut, who had not returned with the broken remains of that army which had marched upon Guadix, and fell in the Zenete.

Notwithstanding this, some would remain persevering in their attentions, expecting that time and new pretensions would blot out in the heart of the Moorish woman the remembrance of Aben-Hamut, who, doubtlessly, must have perished in that disastrous undertaking.

An immense crowd had one day surrounded the entrenchment, and the bread was rapidly disappearing, whilst the Almoravides were forced to restrain the surging crowds who were hungrily struggling to approach the bakery, by sheer force of their lances.

At that moment two soldiers were seen

* The equivalent among the Moors for squadron.

coming from the upper side of the street Elvira, and who, to judge by their uniforms, belonged to the troops of Muza. These came forcing their way through the crowd, elbowing right and left, without regard to age, women, or children.

These did not come for bread, for being soldiers they were well provided for in the barracks of the wealthy and powerful Emir; but they came to look upon the eyes of the woman, and they attempted not only to reach the entrenchment, but pass beyond and enter the apartment where, upon clean tables, the exquisite fritters and cakes were ranged and served to the daily customers.

The attempt was simply foolhardy: the bread had all been disposed of, yet the crowds pressed on, and these two soldiers continued pushing and driving everything before them, until the crowds, which had been hitherto engaged in providing for their wants, at length began to notice them, and a terrible outcry was raised of envy and indignation.

The faces and fists of all became directed towards the two Moors, who had succeeded in reaching the entrenchment.

“ Out with the slaves ! ” the crowd began to cry ; “ we are coming for bread, but these have a surfeit. Out with them ! let them go and cast themselves at the feet of their master, the Emir ! ”

And stones followed words ; the bakery was then quickly closed, and the almoravides began to lay their lances upon the rioters.

These became exasperated, whilst the two almogawars, seeing their intentions frustrated by the early closing of the shop, looked at each other fiercely and in a hostile manner.

“ Thou art the cause,” said the one, “ that Haxima has closed the door upon us.”

“ No, indeed ; it is thou, who hast irritated these dogs by hustling and pushing them in order to get in before me,” rejoined the other.

“ Thou liest ! ” said the first.

At the word lie, the almogawar, who was not a man to brook an insult, drew his sword from its sheath, and the other quickly followed his example.

The irritated crowd judged that those swords were directed to their damage, and therefore

rushed upon the almogawars and almoravides with clubs, poniards, and stones.

Others hearing the outcry, and seeing the bakery closed, joined the crowd, and the tumult increased, and their voices rose louder, indignant at the want of bread, and blows and stones followed, until it rose to such a formidable riot, that what had at first commenced by a love dispute finished in a terrible rebellion.

The King was at that moment coming down from the Alhambra to go to the Albaicin, as he was in the habit of doing every day, in order to lay his love and entreaties at the feet of the inexorable Zoraida. He was dressed in splendid robes and dazzling jewels, and was escorted by Muza Ebn-Abil-Gazan and a superb guard, when they suddenly found themselves in the midst of the riot.

The splendour of Abu-Abd-Allah irritated the people, who were wanting bread whilst their King was revelling in luxury; and the crowds changing the object of their wrath, directed the hissing, stones, and imprecations towards and against the King.

Muza, frowning and wrathful, dashed with

his company right into the crowd. The uproar increased, muskets were fired, fresh combatants joined the crowd, a fearful encounter took place, and blood flowed in the streets.

Then throughout the multitudes was heard the ringing, terrifying cries of "Death to the King! death to the Emir! let us capitulate with the Christians!"

At that juncture a venerable old man, who was greatly respected by the people, Macer-el-Alime, at the peril of his life made a way for himself, and, attending solely to the salvation of his country, cried out to the rioters, who at once put down their weapons on hearing his voice—

"What means this furious riot, Mussulmans? Until when will you be so disunited and so frantic, that through sheer passion and cupidity you should so far forget yourselves, your children, wives, and country? . . . Is it not a crying shame thus to destroy one another? . . . If infamy does not move you, let the danger in which you are all in arouse you; and were so much brave, precious blood shed in fighting against our enemies, our con-

quering flags would have ere this reached the Guadalquiver and the far distant Tagus." *

The old man continued these and other powerful reasons, until the people became apparently calmed down, and lowered their weapons. They allowed the King to pass, dispersed, washed away the blood, removed the dead, and the city lapsed into its wonted silence and quietude.

Haxima, the beautiful Moorish woman who had been the innocent cause of this riot, cautiously opened the door, and when she saw that the street was clear of people, she let a strong, powerfully-built man out, who started at a quick pace up the street whilst she closed the door.

The Moor reached the door of Elvira, went into the field, followed the length of the wall, hiding himself from the guards, and taking a cross-road, walked on until he reached the camp of Santa Fé.

He must needs have been well known, since the watch-guards made no attempt to deter his entrance, and he continued walking until

* Historical. *Vide* Conde, "History of the Domination of the Arabs in Spain."

he approached the guards of the royal tents, where, after a brief delay, he was admitted.

At the far end of the tents a number of ladies were engaged in embroidering a piece of tapestry work. By their side, seated on a high-backed chair, was a lady of mature age, of noble and grave demeanour, though stern; she was dressed in a plain black dress, and her head was encircled by a kerchief of crimson velvet worked in gold.

This lady, before whom the Moor had prostrated himself, was Doña Isabel, the Queen of Castille.

Close to her sat a gentleman of rather advanced age, also dressed in black; his head was covered by a velvet biretta, and a golden sword was buckled to his side. His sunburnt, and foreboding countenance was turned with a deep expression towards a man who, with uncovered head and respectful mien, was conversing in a low tone with the Queen, who from time to time allowed an almost imperceptible smile to play around the hard lines of her mouth.

He who sat with covered head by the side of the Queen was the King, Don Ferdinand V.

of Aragon. He who conversed with the Queen was Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova.

When the Moor prostrated himself before the Queen, she made a sign to her ladies, and they at once left their work and retired to another part of the tent.

Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova made as though he also was about to retire.

"No, Captain Gonzalo, do not go," said the Queen, "but be good enough to remain; for doubtlessly this infidel has come to apprise us of some fresh outbreak or outrage which has been committed in Granada against the King Abu-Abd-Allah."

"Truly it is so, noble and powerful Sultana," replied the Moor, who was a spy of the Christians. "Hunger is afflicting the city, mutinies and riots are on the increase, and cries of capitulation are heard rising among the factions; and were ladders placed against the walls and petards at the doors, thou couldst, during one of these outbreaks, enter within the city which up to this time has been called invincible."

The traitor ceased speaking, and Ferdinand the Catholic rose up.

“What new conflict,” he asked, “oppresses Granada?”

The Moor once more lifted his voice before the Monarchs, yet he continued prostrated on the ground like a dog at the feet of its master, and recounted to them the riot in the street of Elvira, mentioned the name of Haxima, who was his own niece, and the rivalry of the almogawars; he descanted upon the beauty and discretion of the Moorish woman, and then relapsed into silence.

Their Catholic Majesties dismissed him, and as he left the tent a servant of the household gave the traitor some silver coins.

The King and Queen remained alone with Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova.

“Thou seest, Gonzalo,” said the Queen, smiling, “how another occasion presents itself to thee for winning gallantly the challenge which has already added three glorious achievements to our conquests. The carrying away of this woman from the centre of that terrible city would certainly have offered sufficient theme for writing verses to good Juan de Mena, the songster of our grandfather, Don Juan II., were he living.”

“Or to inspire doleful ditties from the melancholy Jorje Manrique,” bitterly observed Ferdinand V.

“Well, at all events, Madame, if the Menas and the Manriques are wanting,” replied Fernandez de Cordova, “the woman will not fail to be within the precincts of thy Highness’s tent by this time to-morrow.”

The smile disappeared from the face of the Queen, and her pale cheeks became paler still.

“We have not said this with any such meaning, Captain,” the Queen feelingly rejoined, “since to enter Granada alone, and with no other escort than thy own valour, would be to seek certain death. We forbid thee to do any such thing.”

“I would bring the Sultana herself to thy Majesty instead of that low woman; and even the King Abu-Abd-Allah-‘el-Chico’ from the midst of the guards of his very Alcazar, if such would please your Majesties,” gallantly replied Gonzalo.

“Yes, yes,” the King said bitterly; “it is worthy of the brave to encounter impossibilities. Go, Captain, go, since taking thy sword with thee, thou carriest all that suffices, to

bring her, even shouldst thou have to descend like another Orpheus into the depths of hell."

The King said no more, and the Queen remained silent.

Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova saluted respectfully their Majesties and left the tent. He proceeded towards the tent of Hernan Perez del Pulgar at a slow pace, wrapped in some deep meditation.

The brave Governor del Salar was out pursuing the Moors on the plains, and within the solitary tent only Pedro, the Moorish captive, was to be seen, crouching on his knees, thoughtful and depressed.

On hearing footsteps at the entrance he raised his head, and leaped up as he recognised Gonzalo Fernandez, and respectfully saluted him.

The Captain's countenance became radiant when he saw the Moor, because, being a native of Granada, he could be of great service to him in effecting the execution of his project, which was no other than the carrying away from the city of Granada, on the following day, Haxima, notwithstanding all the Moors who might endeavour to oppose him.

He sat upon the pallet of Pedro, and questioned him concerning the streets and turnings he should have to take when once within the gate of Elvira, in order to reach the bakery.

A tear dimmed the eyes of the Moor. Gonzalo Fernandez had touched, without knowing it, the tenderest and most hidden chord of his heart, because Pedro de Pulgar, the captive of Hernan Perez, was no other than Aben-Hamut, who had returned after the routing of Zenete to Granada, and to whose memory Haxima had remained faithful, and manifested herself so disdainful towards her new admirers.

The Moor gave Gonzalo the necessary information, and then recounted to him his history, which was sad, like that of all absent lovers; and, rendered courageous by the great fame of the Captain, and by the successful issue of the exploit of the *Ave Maria* when Pedro had entered with Pulgar up to the Mosque itself, he implored him to be allowed to accompany him.

"Alone I shall go," replied he of Cordova, "and I feel confident that ere midday to-

morrow thou shalt have seen the Moorish woman in the camp."

A word pledged by Gonzalo de Cordova was, in those days, considered to be the most binding pledge known, and the Moor leaped from joy, already considering it certain that on the following day he should embrace the beauteous damsel.

"But in order to effect the undertaking, it will be necessary," continued the Captain, "that thou findest trappings and robes with which to disguise myself as a Moor, so as to be able to pass those dogs, which have sufficiently strong scents to follow the track of a Christian."

Pedro promised this, and he of Cordova left the tent. The Moor remained pensive, thinking in what manner would he be able to provide the requisite equipment for him who was to give a happy termination to his affectionate desires. He suddenly remembered the armoury and horses, the Moorish cloaks and robes, which had been brought from the city as a present to the knights who had fought in defence of the Sultana.

And he worked out his plans so cleverly and

adroitly that, on the following day, ere the sun had risen, he was leading by the hand an Arab horse caparisoned in mail and Moorish trappings, he himself fully equipped, carrying a double-bladed lance, to which a little red flag had been affixed, and made himself announced by the shield-bearers of the powerful Governor of the town and fortress of Illora, Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova in his tent as Captain of Cavalry.

Soon after the Moor had entered the tent, he of Cordova came forth disguised in such a manner that no one could have recognised him for a Christian, but for a Moor of Barbary. He mounted the Arab steed, took the lance, left the camp, and disappeared towards the Vega, carrying with him the fervent prayers for success from the heart of Pedro de Pulgar.

Gonzalo de Cordova spurred his charger and reached the gate of Elvira, which he passed without the guards suspecting that he was aught but a Knight of Granada.

When the valiant Spaniard found himself within the city walls, he felt an almost uncontrollable desire of ascending the Alhambra,

arousing the Alcazar, and taking possession of it in the same manner as Hernan Perez had done the Mosque.

He, however, abandoned the idea with a deep sigh. He saw the magnitude of the undertaking, which rendered it impossible of realisation, and continued following the road which lay before him until he reached the bakery.

The bakery did not present the aspect of the previous day; there were no entrenchments, nor tumult, nor almoravides, nought else was seen but the marks of gunshots on the walls and stains of blood upon the stones.

Further in, and behind the door, Haxima was standing, sad and pensive; leaning against a door which led into a yard where a number of Moors were seated before tables covered with porringers full of fritters.

A man, whom Gonzalo recognised as the spy who had entered and conversed with their Majesties the previous day, was occupied in serving the customers; and two others, the almogawars who had caused the riot, were seated opposite each other looking at the Moorish woman, who was seemingly paying

them no attention, and appeared not to notice them.

But on raising her eyes she encountered those of Gonzalo, who, still on horseback, was fixing upon her his brave, daring looks.

The Moorish woman blushed, and he of Cordova dismounted, fastened the bridle of his horse to a bolt of the door, entered, and went straight up to the damsel.

"May God guard thee, beautiful one!" he said, in broken Arabic. "Art thou Haxima?"

The child—for she was not more than sixteen years of age—raised her smooth, pure brow, and in a trembling voice caused by the respect which the grave and noble countenance of the Castillian inspired, and his dazzling garments and equipment, which appeared to belong to a Prince, timidly replied, "I am Haxima, noble knight."

"Then it is thou I seek," rejoined he of Cordova.

The almogawar soldiers pricked up their ears, and deep astonishment was depicted upon the countenance of Haxima as he continued, saying—

“To-night, in Farque,* the Moor Aben-Hamut is to be married. Since the battle of Zenete he has been a captive of the Christians, and I am his Wali. Whilst I came to-day to visit the King, I took occasion to call here for thee to come with me, in order that thou mayst make fritters for the wedding feast.”

Not a single word was lost by the almogawars of this conversation, nor did they fail to notice the burning colour which overspread her features, which was succeeded by an ashy paleness as she heard the name of Aben-Hamut, and was informed that he was about to marry another and not herself, who had been so faithful to his memory, and from whose eyes tears had never ceased to flow since the unfortunate day when she had so sadly parted from him, to be made a captive by the Christian.

And as nothing equals a woman's daring and audacity when she is wounded in her love and pride, Haxima went in to seek her burnouse and veil, wrapped herself in them, and said to Gonzalo, “This very moment, Señor.”

* A place near Granada, on the road to Guadix.

He of Cordova comprehended well the necessity for diligence in matters of adventuresome exploits, and hence without loss of time he lifted the woman on to the saddle-bow of his horse, and jumped behind her, at the very moment when the Moorish spy appeared at the door of the yard with his hands full of empty porringers, and recognised the man who was robbing his niece as no other than the famous Captain of the King's Guards of the Christian camp.

At the very moment when the Captain was spurring his charger and departing at full speed, the Moor threw away the porringers he held in his hands, rushed into the street, and in an excited manner cried out, "To arms! to arms! The Christians are in Granada! Stop him! he is Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova!"

On hearing that well-known name, the almogmars and some horsemen who were at the time coming down from the Albaicin, preceded by the uncle of Haxima, dashed off in pursuit of Gonzalo Fernandez, who on hearing the uproar behind him, and not wishing the Moors to think that he was flying

from them, and with lowered lance in one hand, and holding firmly at the same time the Moorish woman with his other arm, attacked those who were following him.

His name alone made them take to flight, and his pursuers quickly ran away, fearing lest his terrible lance should come within reach of them, since every stroke meant a dead enemy.

He of Cordova then once more pursued his road ; but the alarm had spread, and crowds of horsemen and soldiers were on his track, and at last his lance was steeped in blood.

His fiery charger trampled down the crowds which surged around him ; his lance was wounding right and left, and the Castillian shield barely sufficed to defend Haxima from the stones which rained over her.

At length he succeeded in driving some against the closed door of Elvira, and these becoming stricken with fear, not finding an outlet through the gate, and the narrow path being defended by the long sword of Gonzalo Fernandez, who had flung away his lance as useless, and was terrifying them by his furious sabre-cuts, the guards opened the

door and allowed them to escape, leaving the field clear to the gallant champion, who spurred his horse, and within a short time had reached the first guards of the Christian watch-tower, situated at a short distance from the city.

Haxima had fainted away; when she recovered she found herself in the loving arms of Pedro de Pulgar, who had gone to await Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova. She then comprehended all, and cast herself at the feet of her robber, and then, more happy upon the saddle of the Moor, they proceeded to follow Gonzalo Fernandez, who conducted her into the Queen's tent.

The Governor of Illora—he who later on was destined to add the Kingdom of Naples to the Spanish crown, the *Great Captain*—had also left his name recorded in the traditions of the conquest of Granada.

* * * *

Haxima became a Christian. The Queen stood sponsor, and bestowed upon her the name of Isabel, and then she married her much - wept - for Aben - Hamut. After the conquest of Granada, their Catholic Majesties

gave the bridal pair the bakery in the street of Elvira, which descended to their heirs for for upwards of two centuries, and was far famed for the exquisite fritters called *buñuelos* which were made and sold by them. (See Note XIX.)





X.

THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

GONZALO FERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA had been commissioned by their Majesties to effect the siege of the city.

The fatal hour was approaching when the standard of Islam was to be wrenched by the hurricane, along with the tower that supported it.

All the paths and roads had been taken by the Christian, and famine was becoming unbearable.

Then did treachery openly manifest itself; then came to light how the principal leaders had, through fear of losing their lives and lands, been in treaty to deliver up the city; then was the cause made manifest of so many

mutinies and riots, of so many lost battles, and so many cherished hopes dashed to the ground. But it was too late then to turn back, or to attend to incurable evils which were deep-seated in the heart of Granada, which yet held out, hoping to obtain succour from Africa.

But assistance was not forthcoming, and hunger increased, and an attack from the Christians was dreaded every moment; and at length the sun arose on the bitter day of the fatal moon of the first Rabie of 896,* and when it set behind the horizon in the evening, it cast its prophetic rays for the last time upon the flag of Islam, which waved from the high tower of the Alhambra.

On the previous day, the weak King Abu-Abd-Allah had gathered together in his Alcazar his Wisirs, his Cadis, and his Fakirs, in order to consult them as to what resolutions should be adopted in this extreme necessity.

The result of this conference proved a fatal one, since those who were suborned by the enemy, and those who were in fear of them,

* 1st January, 1492.

all resolved to deliver up to the Christians that city which had been so aggrandized and rendered splendid by Mahomet el *Bermejo* * two hundred and fifty-four years before, and which had remained strong and powerful up to the time of Abul-Hacen, and then vanquished and ruined by Abu - Abd - Allah el *Zogoibi*.

Those who had assembled in council were disposed to come to terms with the Spanish Kings, with the exception of the valiant Muza, who still confided in the weapons of desperation and vengeance, and judged it was *yet early* to deliver up the city.

Notwithstanding his opinion, it was at length determined to send the Wisir Abul-Cazem-Ab-del-Melic to propose capitulation to the Christians. †

The Kings of Castille and Aragon received this old man very kindly, and deputed the Captain, Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, and his secretary, Fernando de Zafra, to treat with him.

* Abu-Abd-Allah-Abu-Jucef-Ebn-Nazan-al-hhamar, called the Conqueror and the Magnificent.

† Conde, "History of the Domination of the Arabs in Spain," Tom. 3, p. 4.

These knights, accompanied by five others, and preceded by the Wisir, entered secretly into the Alhambra that night, through a subterranean passage between the Tower del Agua and the iron gate, and, shut up in the Tower of Comares, they effected the capitulation for the delivery of the city. (See Note XX.)

When the Wisir, on the following day, presented them to the Council, the paleness of terror was depicted upon the countenances of all. The Sultana Aixa trembled with wrath, and the King, weeping bitterly, sought to conceal his sorrow by casting himself into the arms of his mother.

Then, in the midst of that scene of desolation, the intrepid Muza arose serene, though pale, the love of his country burning in his heart, and slowly and sorrowfully looked upon those who were surrounding him, and, in a tone of cold, bitter reproof, said—

“Leave this useless weeping to women and children: let us be men, and have brave hearts, not for shedding tears, but for shedding the last drop of our blood.* Let us

* Historical.

make one more effort, and to arms! Let us die; yes, but let it be like the brave, offering our breasts to the opposing lances."

Muza was a hero: his ringing voice vibrated as though inspired among that assembly of men, terrified by an adverse destiny.

"Dost thou believe," he continued, "that the Christians will be faithful to their promises? Dost thou believe that the King of the Conquest will prove as generous a conqueror as he is a fortunate enemy? Thou art mistaken; they are thirsting for our blood, and they will not rest until they become surfeited with it. Death, terrible death, is the least of the evils which threaten us."

Not a single countenance was raised to look at Muza; not a single voice was lifted up in answer to his.

The Emir in despair girt his almaizar around his arm, advanced to the centre of the apartment, and, casting a look of wrath upon the assembly, cried out, in accents of bitterest contempt—

"Dogs! cowards! traitors! Ye who lack courage to die for your country, remain here, and listen patiently and calmly to these

shameful conditions, and deliver up the city to the Christian. Live in it, to witness the robbery and the sacking of your houses, the profanation of your mosques, your women subjected to violence and outrage; yes, remain here, to deliver up your own miserable bodies to feed the burning bonfires of the conquerors; remain, wretches, to witness so much misery, you who fear an honoured death, because, by Allah, I shall not remain to witness it!" *

And he furiously left the Tower of Comares, entered his Alcazar, took his lance and mounted his horse, and sped away by the door of Elvira, alone, and with no other escort than his own desperation.

The Mussulmans of Granada never again saw or heard what had become of their valiant Emir.

* * * *

The fifth day of the first Rabie dawned.

The Christian army, equipped as for warfare, were marching with lowered flags towards Granada, filling the air with the ringing sound of the trumpets and the beating of drums.

* Historical.

The horses were caparisoned in gala trappings; their riders and soldiers were decked out in garbs of joy, and carried triumphantly their most precious ornaments, plumes and most brilliant jewels; the sun was casting refulgent rays upon their burnished helmets, and joy was depicted upon every countenance; whilst Granada, motionless and silent, was opening the doors of the Alhambra, in order to allow the *Zogoibi* to depart, accompanied by fifty knights chosen from the most noble ones of Granada.

He proceeded to meet the Kings of Castille in that part of the Vega not far from the confluence of the rivers Darro and Genil (see Note XXI.), where stood a mosque. Abu-Abd-Allah was dressed in a black tunic—not, however, in sign of mourning, but as a distinctive mark of his royal dignity: a purple almaizar flowed from his shoulders, and his head was wound with a simple white scarf.

On descending the declivity of Al-baul, his superb charger placed itself in an attitude of defence to receive its enemies, who in truth were to be seen at that very moment approaching in the following order: the Count of

Tendilla, supported by his brother the Cardinal of Spain; and Don Guitierre de Cardenas, Commandeur of Leon, of the order of Santiago. The Count carried the royal flag, the Cardinal the Standard of the Cross, and Don Guitierre the streamer of Santiago, followed by other different flags.

The King at the sight of his enemies became troubled, his countenance grew scarlet with shame, and notwithstanding that the Christians saluted him most respectfully, he set spurs to his horse, and was quickly lost from sight.

The Wisir Ebn-Comija meanwhile delivered up to the Count de Tendilla the keys of the city at the door of the *Siete Suelos* (seven floors), then hastened to join the King, followed by some knights, at the very moment when the hapless man was dismounting before the King of Aragon and advancing to kiss his hand; but Ferdinand would not permit him to do so, Abu-Abd-Allah however, saluted him on the arm, saying, "*We are thine, powerful and exalted King. This city and kingdom we deliver up to thee, because so it has pleased*

*Allah ; and we confide that thou wilt use thy triumph with clemency and generosity.**

The miserable, hapless King became silent from the sobs which rose from his heart ; but restraining his tears, he mounted his steed, and notwithstanding the entreaties of the King, refused to return to Granada ; and, followed by his knights, started at full speed to rejoin his family, who had left the city at day-dawn with their retinue of slaves, taking with them their treasures.

Meanwhile, the Catholic King, the Infantes, the grandees, the captains and soldiers of Castille, who had been fixedly gazing upon the Alcazaba, saw a red flag waving from its height ; then the army prostrated themselves upon the ground, the drums began to beat, and the trumpets to sound, whilst the guns fired a tremendous salute, which resounded with startling effect.

The Count of Tendilla had unfurled from the towers of the Alcazaba in the Alhambra the standards of the Catholic Kings of Castille and Aragon.

* Historical. *Vide* Conde, " History of the Domination of the Arabs in Spain."

Granada was a captive of the Christian.

The flag of Islam had been wrenched by the hurricane along with the tower which supported it.





XI.

THE LAST ADIEU.

Run, run! spur thy mare, O King! spur her on, and hide thyself far away beneath the shade and mists of the night!

Let the night, come quickly, that thou mayst conceal thy tears in its darkness!

Alas! alas! hapless King! Run, because that booming sound that breaks the wind, that detonation which reverberates in space, are the joyous cries of the conqueror!

Mark how thy fifty knights are silent!

Muza is wanting from among them! Muza thy brother! Muza the brave one! Muza, who has been engulfed along with the loss of thy country!

Run, run, Abu-Abd-Allah! Run as fast as

thy tears are coursing down thy cheeks ! run far from that Eden of delights, where the purple flowers grow and blossom under the rays and light of that golden sun !

* * * *

And the King spurred on his mare until her flanks streamed with blood.

His knights followed him with lowered reversed lances and flags trailing in the dust in sign of mourning. These few loyal ones trembled with wrath and shame every time they heard the booming of the guns which were fired in triumph.

Once again did the King and his knights dismount and prostrate themselves in sign of vassalage at the feet of the Queen Isabel I. of Castille, who, surrounded by her ladies, and protected by a regiment of lancers commanded by Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, was standing upon a spot called Armilla beholding the taking of the city.

The Queen raised him up, and spoke words of comfort to that unhappy King. Once more he with his knights mounted their steeds, and continued their road silently and sorrowfully at full speed. They passed the town of Al-

hendin when the sun, which had risen lighting up "*Granada the Sultana*," was fast setting in the West, and bathing with its last sad rays "*Granada the Captive*."

When the evening mists were rising like a veil of mystery between the city and the distant hills, the King overtook the Queen-Mother and his consort on the declivity of the heights of Padul.

On the summit of the hill through a narrow break a last glimpse could be taken of Granada.

The King dismounted and prostrated himself on the ground, then with a breaking heart and brimming eyes looked upon his city.

And he gazed upon her as the dying man looks upon the life which is fast speeding from him, like the unfortunate look upon hope, and the miser upon his treasures.

His soul became embittered, and, unable any longer to restrain his sorrow, he broke out into a deep-drawn sigh. The hapless King fell on his face to the ground, and, giving a piercing cry, exclaimed, *Allah-Akbar!* *

The Sultana Aixa, who saw him thus, be-

* God is great.

came pale, and, frowning full of indignation, she contemptuously withdrew her eyes from him, saying, “ *Yes, miserable coward! weep like a woman, since thou knew not how to defend thy throne like a man!* ”

Desperation, shame, sorrow, drew burning tears from the eyes of Abu-Abd-Allah. He mounted his charger, furiously setting spurs into her, and the animal dashed off on the road with such impetus that she left the prints of her hoofs marked upon the rock, and which are still seen to this day.

The King and his retinue at length turned the point of Geb-el-Solair, and became lost in the distance as they proceeded to take the road in the dim twilight towards the Mountains of the Alpujarras.

* * * *

Since that day, the Moors, in memory of this sorrowful farewell, called that tearful spot on the heights of Padul, Fez-Allah-Akbar, and even to this day it is known among Christians by the appellation of the *Suspiro del Moro*—the sigh of the Moor.

* * * *

The Genius of the Alhambra has dis-

appeared, nought remains but mist and silence.

The gallant Arabs, the brave Castillians, the elegant ladies, the palace of pearls—all has become engulfed in the past.

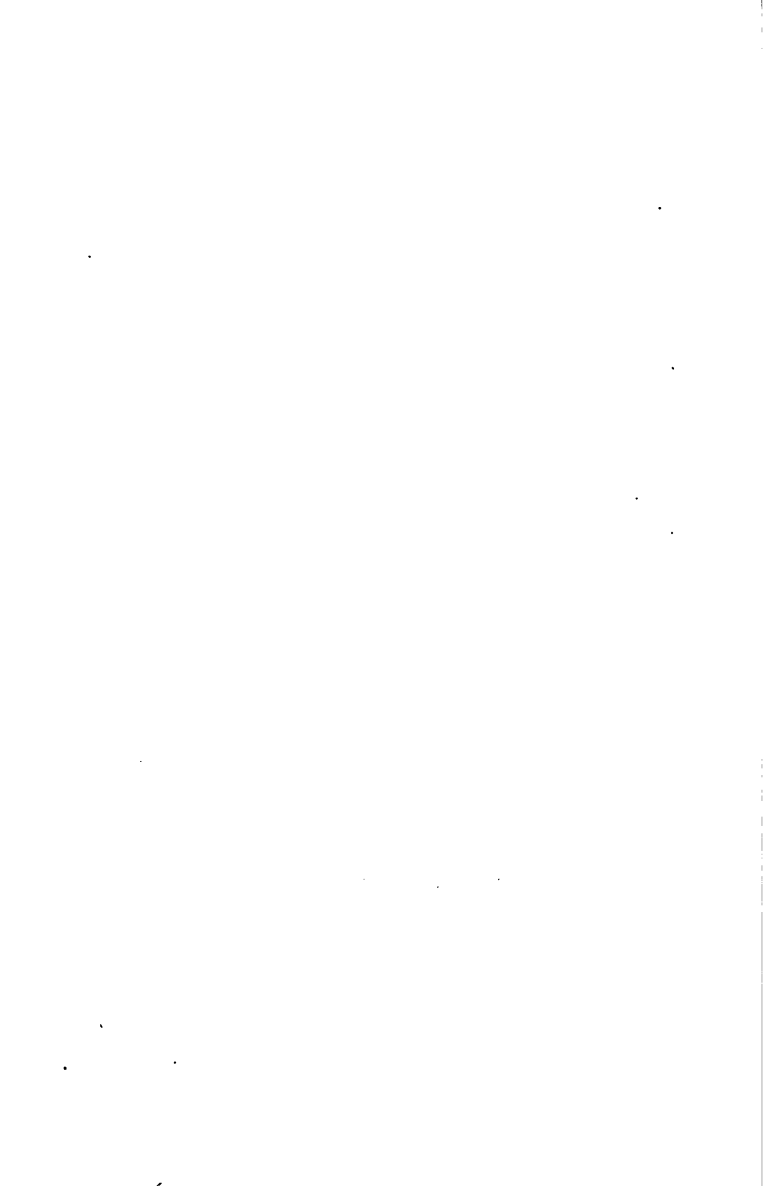
And of all that still remains is the sound of the bell of the Vela, which is heard vibrating solemnly and clearly in the silence like a cry from past generations.

When the day dawns, that historic bell is silenced; the cry of the phantoms arises only in the stillness of night.

Fly, fly away, dreams of glory! The Hand of God is hastening thee swiftly into the past, and will speedily envelope thee in the winding-sheet of forgetfulness!

Praised be Him, the Magnifier! He Who extolleth and Who humbleth and bringeth down all things that breathe! Praised be Him, Who ruleth with justice and equity all human events!

Allah-Akbar :





NOTES.



I.

THIS part of the Alcazar at the present day is called the *Chamber of the Abencerrajes*. It is entered through an archway which leads to an ante-room, or narrow corridor, at the ends of which are modern doors leading to inner apartments. An oval, arched roof follows the length of this corridor, which is elaborated with leaves, fishes, flowers, cuneiform characters, and parted globes bearing inscriptions. The interior of this retreat has been restored since a fire which took place in the Alhambra, owing to a powder magazine having exploded, which was close to the Fargue.

This Chamber communicates with no other department, and has two open alhamies, or alcoves, on its sides. These alcoves are supported by two

elegant columns, elaborated like the pavement. In the centre of the Chamber stands a fountain, which, like the columns, is of white marble. The ornamentation of this Chamber is exactly like that of the *Chamber of the Two Sisters* (so called from two marble slabs of equal size which are inserted in the pavement, each slab measuring 165 inches in length and 76 in breadth). The ornamentation of the walls commences by a band of encaustic tiles of vivid colours and intricate work; above this is another band of alternate medals and medallions bearing inscriptions, which goes the whole round of the Chamber. The inscriptions are: "*Let glory be perpetually given to the Lord. May the Kingdom of the Lord subsist for ever.*" Above this is another band, bearing the device, in African characters, of "*God only is Conqueror.*"

From the arches are strings of beads, flowers, and filagree festoons, bearing devices in African characters; also a band with a blazon of Alhamar adopted by the Kings of Granada, viz., a shield with a diagonal band from right to left issuing from the mouth of a dragon bearing the device in African characters of "*Le Galib ile Allah*" ("God only is Conqueror"). Above this, on the sides of this lovely and wondrously-worked cupola, starred with stalactites, are oval windows which open and shut, but which seem to have been originally covered by transparencies. The adornment of the alhamies, or alcoves, is similar to that of the Cham-

ber itself, and its ceilings are level, richly joined. The fountain is raised six inches from the ground, and bears large stains upon its white marble, which undoubtedly was the origin of the traditions concerning the beheading of the Abencer-rajcs, which Gines Perez de Hita has consigned to posterity in his "Romances and Civil Wars of Granada."

II.

Simoom: A hot, suffocating wind, that blows occasionally in Africa and Arabia, generated by the extreme heat of the parched deserts or sandy plains. Its approach is indicated by a redness in the air. Its fatal effects are such that those touched by it are reduced to dust, notwithstanding that their forms remain unchanged.

III.

The Arabs call the different hours by the following appellations:—The hour of Azobbi, the day dawn; Adoha is the full day; Adohar, midday; Alazar, mid-evening; Almagrib, the sunset; Alatenia, or Alaja, nightfall and commencement of night, according to their custom of dividing their hours of prayer, or Azalaes.

IV.

The order of the months of the Arabs, which they call moons, is as follows :—Muharram, Safer, the first Rabie, the second Rabie, the first Guimada, the second Guimada, Regel Xaban, Ramazan Xawal, Dilcada, and Dilhagia. It should be adverted that their year commences at the middle of the Christian year.

V

On the left of the entrance to the Chamber of Comarech there is a corridor, which crosses some modern apartments, and leads to a gallery sustained by marble columns, at the end of which is a minaret, also sustained by marble columns, the centre being a quadrangle, and is lit up by nine windows. The walls of this retreat, and of the ante-room which precedes it, are painted *al fresco*, representing landscapes and sea pieces. The ceiling is domed, ornamented by Arabic fretwork and gold mouldings. This apartment is now called the Queen's dressing-room, which no doubt derived its name from a perforated slab, which was evidently meant for the passage of perfumes, and must have doubtlessly been transferred from some other part of the Alcazar to this room.

This apartment was, in the time of the Moors, the tower of the Palace, or, according to a well-received opinion, it was a *mirab*, or oratory. This

opinion seems to be fully justified by the following inscriptions which finish the ornamentation of the room :—

“ In the Name of God the Merciful, and Who has mercy.

“ May God be with our Lord and Prophet Mahomet. To him and his friends health and salvation for endless ages.

“ God is the light of heaven and of earth : His light is like to Himself : a luminary, being many, His rays, yet He is One only. He is the Lamp of lamps, like to a brilliant constellation, and burns with holy oil not brought from the East nor from the West, which, being once enkindled, giveth light ; and without being touched is light above the light. And God with His light guideth whom He loveth. God is the Giver of proverbs to His people, and God is wise in all things.”

VI

This Chamber is known at the present time under the name of *Chamber of Divans*, and is a portion of the royal baths of the Alhambra. It is square, and supported by four white marble columns, which form a gallery all round : on the sides, and opening into the inner wall of the gallery, are alhamies, or alcoves, formed by arches sustained upon three columns, and raised some two feet from the pavement ; and it was set apart

for the divans upon which the Kings reposed after the bath.

The pavement of this retreat is Mosaic. In the centre stands a fountain; the walls are adorned with enamelled tiles to the height of six feet, above which runs a band with the motto "*Plus ultra*," which was added in the time of the Emperor Charles V.

There are small arched doors in the four angles; three of them are, however, blocked up, and the fourth leads into other apartments by a narrow corridor; the gallery and alcoves possess a straight roof, beautifully worked and starred, inlaid with silver.

In this gallery was a kind of raised stage, where musicians were in the habit of playing and performing during the repose of the Kings after the bath.

The apse and spandrils of the arches were adorned with flowers, fishes, and bows of ribbon. This apartment is lighted by sixteen windows.

VII.

This is a hall of inferior size. Nothing Arabic remains at the present day, with the exception of some columns on the north side, and a fountain, the base of which is of later date than the conquest; and above it is placed a superb basin of white

marble, discoloured by time and water. No doubt this basin had been brought here from some other part; some are of opinion that it originally stood in the centre of the Chamber of Cosmarech.

VIII.

On entering into these baths by the gallery which communicates with the Chamber of Divans, some small chambers are reached, in each of which there is a marble basin or fount, and above a small niche of the same marble with arabesque sculpturing, and below it is a channel for the conduit of the water.

It is believed that these were the baths for the royal children. A larger retreat follows this, which serves as an ante-room to a large square Chamber with a door which leads to the baths for the Kings. It contains two larger baths: one is twelve feet long and about seven feet wide and two deep, with two channels for the conduit of the water; the other is about eight feet square and some thirty inches deep. Above each bath there is a niche similar to the others already referred to. In the centre of this apartment there was a door, which led to where the water was heated.

IX.

The hand and key found sculptured upon the principal arch, and also in that which forms the

door, are considered mysterious emblems . . . The Arabs, who inherited from the Egyptians the use of hieroglyphics, represent power by a strong hand in the shape which is seen upon this arch. The same sign designates the *Hand of God*, and was a compendium of the Moslem law ; because in the same way as the hand has five fingers, and each finger three joints, with the exception of the thumb, which has but two, and all are subject to the union of the hand which serves as their base ; so in the same manner does the Mahomedan law impose five primary precepts.

The first is, Believe in God and in Mahomet ; the second, The precept of prayer ; the third, To give alms ; the fourth, To fast during the time of Ramadam ; the fifth, Pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina. Each of these precepts has three modifications, with the exception of the fifth, which can only be reduced to two, *good heart and good deeds*, and corresponds to the thumb.

These dogmas flow from the unity of God, and the whole Mahomedan law is explained by the hand, which has five fingers and fourteen joints.

The key is the principal sign of the Moslem faith, being an emblem as important and mysterious as the hand. It represents the power of opening and closing the gates of heaven, a power which was conceded to the Prophet.

Some have explained the emblems of the hand and key by saying that the Moors wished to sig-

nify the impossibility or difficulty of entering into the stronghold and of destroying the Moslem faith, since it would be easier for the hand to turn and take the key to open to the enemy, than to conquer the sons of the Prophet, and wrench from their hearts the principles of their belief. (*Vide* Lafuente Alcantara, "Libro del Viagero en Granada.")

X.

Boabdil, encouraged by some advantages which had been gained by the armies in 1483, and incited by the gossip of his vassals, who held him to be more incapable than his aged father Abul-Hacen, wished to carry out some exploit which would bring fame upon his party, and he therefore marched upon Lucena, which at the time was badly defended.

The chroniclers say that, on leaving the door of Elvira, accompanied by a large staff, his lance broke against the arch of the door or gate, and this occurrence was considered an ill omen.

The King, however, passed on, thinking he would obtain a signal victory.

Don Diego de Cordova, who held the governorship of the castle, fortified the city, and apprised Don Alonso de Aguilar and the leader of the Donceles, who at once came with some cavalry, and proceeded to meet Boabdil, who had already advanced before Lucena, and was threatening the

Governor that unless he delivered up the fortress, he would enter it by force of arms, and would put the garrison to death. The Governor, in order to gain time, proceeded to arrange treaties of delivery; and in this way a great part of the day was spent, during which the champions of the leader of the Donceles, who were coming to the succour of Lucena, suddenly showed themselves, and attacked the Moorish army, and disbanded it. As the greatest force of the army were horsemen, they placed themselves in a position for attack, without caring much about the routing of the infantry.

The squadrons met, and a fierce battle took place. Those of the city suddenly appeared, and fell upon the Moors at the very moment when Don Alonso de Aguilar entered the battle-field with a brilliant squadron of lancers.

The Moors withdrew to the opposite side of the river, and the valiant Captain, Ali-Atar, Governor of Loja, who was standing close to the King, fell pierced by lances. His death, and the loss of the fifty knights who were defending the King, left him alone and surrounded by his enemies. He attempted to escape, but he plainly perceived that his horse was in far too exhausted a state to be able to carry him a sufficient distance to place him in safety; and therefore on crossing the river he dropped down from his horse, and concealed himself amongst some reeds, where three

Christian soldiers were closely following him. Through fear of his life, he revealed to them who he was. They apprehended him, and took him to their Captain. This was the first and last battle in which the King found himself, whom, with good reason, his people styled "*el Desventuradillo*."

XI.

This was a renegade Christian called Isabel, daughter of the Governor of Martos, the Com-mandeur Sancho Gimenez de Solis. She was made a captive by the Moors in one of their entries into the land of Martos ; and the aged King Abul-Hacen fell in love with her, made her his spouse, and called her by the name of Zoraya (Morning Star). He abandoned for this new love the haughty Sultana Aixa, his cousin, by whom he had Abu-Abd-Allah, who succeeded him on the throne, or rather was cast from it. By Zoraya he had two sons, called Sidy-Zahye and Sidy-Alhamar. Jealousy and ambition between the Sultanas were the cause in a great measure of the factions and loss of Granada.

XII.

Abul Walid Abul Said, fifth King of the Nazarite dynasty, reigned three years, from 1322 to 1325. He was assassinated at the door of his

Alcazar by Mahomet Ebn-Ismail, on account of some love intrigue with a beautiful slave, whom he had captivated when he entered the town of Martos, and which the King had appropriated to himself when the booty was distributed. (*Vide* Conde, "History of the Arabs in Spain," part iv.).

XIII.

See the first Note.

XIV.

In the garden of a Franciscan Convent in Zubia there still exists an ancient laurel-tree or bush, where the horse of Queen Isabella was concealed. From this spot the whole length of Granada is seen; and she had upon one occasion come here to look upon the city, when she was attacked by the Moors, who were, however, driven back by the Marquis of Cadiz and his troop of 1200 lancers, who were escorting the Queen. This event took place on the 25th of August, 1491, being the feast of St. Louis, King. During the encounter she offered the Holy King, should she be delivered from the danger in which she was placed, to erect a Franciscan Convent under his invocation. The battle was gained by the Christians, and the convent was erected soon after the conquest.

The traveller is still shown a window in an

angle of the cloister from whence, it is said, the Queen witnessed the combat. The laurel-bush is held in great veneration by the natives of Zubia, a town which preserves many other historical recollections.

XV.

This building is called "*Casa del Carbon*," because in it was deposited all combustibles until leave was granted to the owners to dispose of them. Judging from its remains, this building in its days of glory must have been of sumptuous magnificence. The decoration and ornamentation is similar to that of the Hall of Lions.

XVI.

In all probability, Pulgar and the five shield-bearers entered into Granada by the street called *Gallineria*, which runs parallel with the river up to the Bridge del Carbon, through the Zacatin and lane "*Del Tinte*," and into the site of the Church del Sagrario, which then was a Mosque.

XVII.

In the "*Archives del Salar*" there exists a royal letters patent of the Emperor Charles V., commanding the Cathedral Chapter of Granada to give effect to the concession of interment granted

by their Catholic Majesties to Hernan del Pulgar. This document is dated from the Alhambra of the City of Granada, on 29th September, 1526.

XVIII.

In the "Archives del Salar," lib. i., p. 2, No. 8, there exists an original deed of their Catholic Majesties in favour of the fifteen shield-bearers who, with Hernan Perez del Pulgar, entered into Granada, awarding lands and properties in the City. This document is dated 30th December, 1491, and is signed by the King and Queen.

XIX.

This bakery existed even down to our times without interruption since the conquest, and in the identical house, which now is an ironmongery, and forms an angle with another shop for the sale of drinks and liqueurs, which fronts the Pilar del Toro.

XX.

It has seemed opportune to insert in this place some of the most notable items in the capitulation for the delivery of Granada:—

"It is agreed that their Majesties and their descendants for ever shall allow the said King Muley Boabdil and the Knights, Fakirs, and

Shield-bearers, &c., &c., to live and reside according to their laws, whether in small or large communities; and they shall abide by their laws according to the custom of the Moors; and they be allowed to call the faithful by their muezzins from the minarets to their *Azalaes*, or hours of prayer.

“Also, that neither now nor hereafter shall their Majesties or their descendants oppress or harass the said Moors, those who are now living or those which shall succeed them.

“Also, that no Christian shall attempt to enter into the house of prayer of the Moors without leave from the Fakir; and that if he do enter he be punished by their Majesties.

“Also, that any debate or question which may arise between the said Moors shall be decided according to their *Xaracima* law, and they be judged by their Alcadis according to the usages of the Moors.

“Also, that should any Christian force an entry into the house of any Moor, that their Majesties command the law to proceed against him.

“Also, that no law proceedings be taken against the person of any Moor on account of any evil which another may have done, and that the father is not to suffer for the evil done by the son, nor son for father, nor brother for brother, nor cousin for cousin. He that hath done the evil must bear the punishment of it.

“Also, that should any Moor take to wife a Christian woman who may have renounced her faith and become a Mahomedan, she shall not be compelled to return to her former religion and Christian faith against her will; or if questioned whether she desires to be a Christian, it must be in presence of both Moors and Christians.

“Also, that no Moorish man or woman shall be forced to become a Christian.

“Also, that should any Moorish woman, whether single, married, or widow, wish to become a Christian, she shall not be received until she be duly questioned and admonished; and any jewels or other articles which she should forcibly take out of her father’s house, or relation, or from any other person, these said articles must be returned and restored to their owners, and the law to proceed against the theft as in justice bound.”

In several articles promises are made that no punishment nor account be taken of former acts. In one the following is stated:—

“It is agreed that their Majesties and their descendants for ever shall not be able to demand of, nor command, the said King Boabdil, or any of the aforesaid Moors, to deliver up any one thing until the day of the termination of the said delivery of the Alhambra—that is, during the said term of sixty days, within which the Alhambra and other strongholds are to be delivered up.”

In the following article will be seen a vestige of the old civil wars :—

“ Also, that no knight, governor, nor servant, which were of the King, who was of Guadix, shall have any command over them.”

Besides the treaty of capitulation, relative to the delivery of the City of Granada, and made to protect the inhabitants, there is another treaty which was agreed upon on the same day, and at the same place, which is also to be found in the “ Archives of Simancas,” and bears the following inscription :—

“ The original treaty of capitulation of the Catholic Kings with Muley Abdali, King of Granada.”

Amongst some of the articles, it says the following :—

“ The things which, by command of the most powerful Princes, the King and Queen, our Lord and Mistress, were agreed with the Governor Bulacin el Muleh, in the name of Muley Boaudely, King of Granada, and in virtue of his power are as follows :—

“ Boabdil promises to deliver up the City, and give 500 men as hostages for greater security, on the Catholic King reiterating his promise to receive and treat the Moors as subjects, protecting their person and goods, honouring and favouring them.

“ To Boabdil and his descendants for ever were given the towns and places of the districts of

Beja, Dalias, Marxena, Boloduy, Lahar, Andarax, Uxfar, &c., with all their rents, taxes, and contributions.

“Should Boabdil wish to dispose of his lands, &c., the Kings of Castille are to have the preference in the purchase.

“Should Boabdil and his family wish to pass over to Africa, the Kings of Castille are to provide the ships, as well as all necessary help and assistance, free of charge and dues or duties.

“Their Majesties are to accord the same privileges to the Queen Mother and the Queen Consort of Muley Bulnazer of lands and properties, &c., which they possess in the said City of Granada, and in the Alpujarras, with right of selling or enjoying under equal terms with the said King.”

Over and above these lands and possessions, Boabdil received a sum of money after the Christians had entered into the Alhambra, and taken possession of the rest of the fortresses in the City of Granada.

It was also agreed that, after the King Muley Boaudely should leave the said City of Granada, he should be at liberty to reside and die in any of the above-mentioned possessions, and quit Granada accompanied by his servants and knights, &c.

This document bears the respective signatures of both King and Queen. The seal is imprinted

upon red wax, around which is the following inscription :—

“Helisabeh, Dei gracia egira
Castillae, Legionis, el Siciliae.”

Beneath is read :—

“By command of the King and Queen—
Fernando de Zafra.”

XXI.

This Mosque, which was afterwards consecrated under the invocation of Saint Sebastian, was profaned and converted into a tavern, and its religious and historical records destroyed, still retains upon a part of its walls a white marble slab, with the following inscription written in Gothic characters :—

“Muley Abdeli, the last Moorish King of Granada, delivered up the keys of the said City on Friday, 2nd of January, 1492, at three o'clock in the afternoon, at the doors of the Alhambra, into the hands of our Catholic Monarchs, the King Don Fernando de Aragon and Doña Isabel of Castille, after having endured the Mahomedan yoke for 777 years since the loss of Spain, which occurred on Sunday, November 2nd, 714. The above-mentioned Catholic King bade farewell to the aforesaid Boabdil at this place, *which was then a Mosque, and now is the Church of Saint Sebastian*, wherein the first thanksgiving was offered to God

our Lord by our glorious Conqueror, and his army, the royal chapter intoning the *Te Deum*, and waving the royal standard of the faith from the Tower of the Vela.

In memory of which event, public prayers are offered at this hour in the Cathedral, and a Plenary Indulgence gained by reciting three *Paternosters* and three *Ave Marias*.

THE END.

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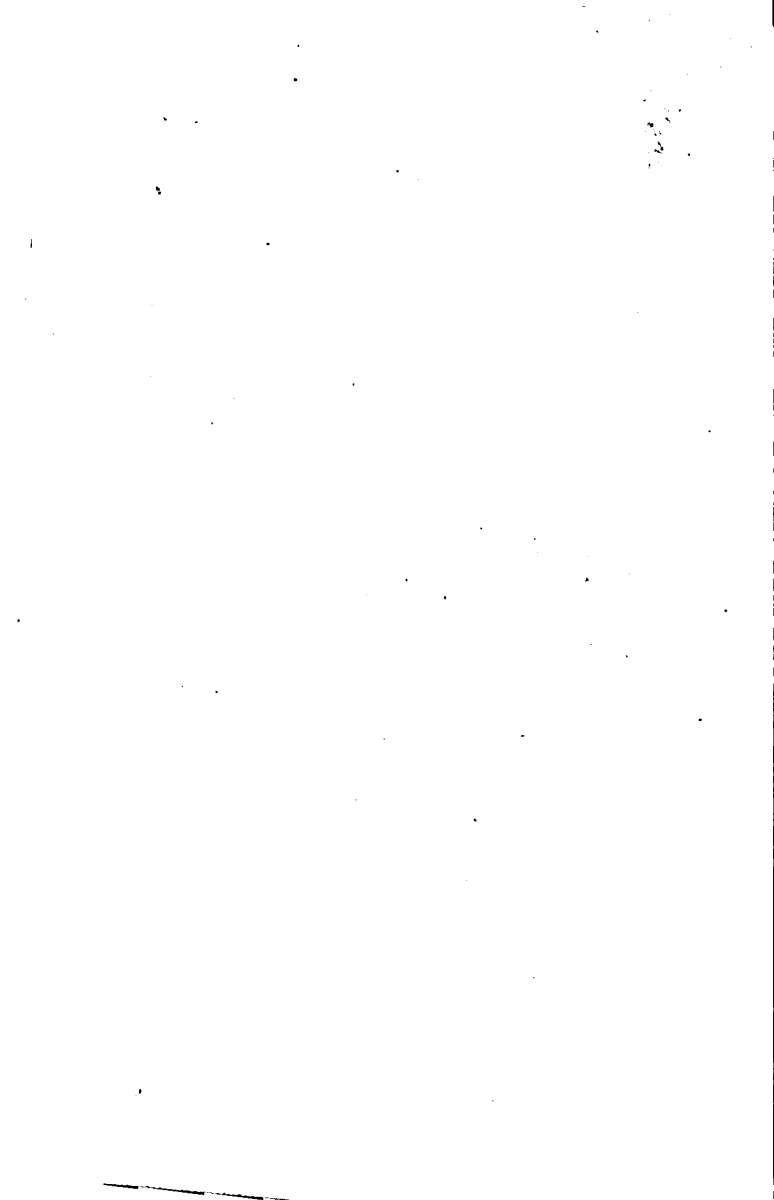
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